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THE GIFT HORSE'S MOUTH

THE great American process of deliberation on the programme of aid to Europe has begun, with the usual result that the general public on both sides of the Atlantic is utterly confused as to what is seriously proposed and what is said to impress "the boys back home." It is difficult to calculate from the figures put forward by Mr. Marshall on Monday, or from those of the Harriman Report, just how much long-term aid is likely to reach Europe. The programme seems unlikely to cover more than, say, two-thirds of the original deficit estimated by the Paris Conference, though the contributions made by loans from the International Bank are not yet precisely stated. But in any case it is evident that a very large amount is involved, and that it can only be given by some sacrifice on the part of the American people in the way of continued shortages and no reduction in taxes. In these circumstances it was to be expected that close and detailed American supervision of the aid would be stipulated. Though the Secretary of State's proposals on this point are not very clear, there will probably be an American "economic ambassador" in every recipient country, whose function will be to see that the aid is not squandered, as well as to represent the needs of that country before the central American body administering European aid.

The functions of this economic ambassador will be vastly increased if the proposal that most of the American aid should be paid for in local currency and put into blocked accounts for special purposes, is carried out. The Herter Committee proposed that he should be virtually responsible for the capital investment of these funds. This might be logical, but it would give the Americans responsibility in the eyes of Europeans for any major failures of economic policy. Many governments might be only too glad to ascribe slowness of recovery to an outside and non-elected authority. For the speed of recovery is as important as recovery itself.

Few Western European political systems can survive many more years of scraping the bottom of the barrel. That is why the drastic cuts in the Paris figures made by the Harriman Committee have caused consternation, and why criticism is likely to fasten on the State Department's insistence that aid should be based on bi-lateral agreements, not on the collective plan outlined in Paris. If American aid is to be purely for relief and not for recovery the whole constructive approach of the original Harvard speech will be lost. It is, however, only fair to say that Mr. Marshall's proposals to Congress have once again stressed the concept of recovery, and distinguished it from the interim aid of $600 millions to France, Italy and Austria, and the $500 millions to be voted for "occupation costs" in Germany, Korea and China. The Secretary of State is doubtless informed, as Congress is probably not, that if insufficient aid is given to Western Europe, and restoration of the 1938 standards is delayed beyond 1950, the countries of Eastern Europe will have won the race of recovery, and the magnetism of success will be on their side of the Iron Curtain.

The Harriman Committee criticises the Paris Report as unduly optimistic in its plans for capital expansion, and recommends heavy cuts—including a curtailment of shipbuilding. Its attitude exposes it to the charge that it does not desire to promote European recovery on lines competitive with American industries and services. The State Department does not express agreement with the Committee in this respect, but cuts—in steel and machinery—are likely to be made because of the unavailability of export surpluses in America. So the Sixteen Nations are faced with the likelihood that the most constructive parts of their recovery plan, on which the whole production expansion programme was based, may prove impracticable. In the circumstances, there may be a general disposition to throw the plans of co-operation conceived at Paris overboard, blame the Americans for their failure, and indulge in an unseemly squabble for places in the queue to receive American hand-outs as an alternative to still lower immediate standards of living.

This would be defeatism. If Congress proposes, it is for Europe to dispose. If American aid on the scale and on the terms requested at Paris is not forthcoming, the need for close co-operation between the Sixteen Nations, especially in the matter of steel production and capital expansion, is greater, not less. A further lesson to be derived from the Marshall proposals is that we must make still greater efforts to free ourselves from that dependence on transatlantic markets which is the root, not merely of our troubles, but of the inflation which is afflicting America. Since all we can now expect from the United States is a selective programme of relief, based mainly on estimates of American strategic advantage, it becomes more than ever necessary to press on with plans for expanding our trade with Eastern Europe, and thus helping to restore, as far as possible, the economic unity of the Continent.

Big Four Dissension

Since failure at the Foreign Ministers' forthcoming conference is now taken for granted, and by some of the participants even desired, agreement at the preliminary discussions at Lancaster House was equally impossible. Disagreement is now recorded on all issues except perhaps the agenda for November 25th. When the Ministers meet, the two main topics before them will be the Austrian and German treaties. The public has little information about the issues in Austria, apart from the clear reluctance of the occupying Powers to move out, and the quarrel about reparations and the Soviet seizure of oilfields. The only reliable account we have seen of the situation in Austria is a document published by the Union of Democratic Control (34, Victoria Street, S.W.1) which deals with the frontier problem, the Yugoslav claims for reparations, "German assets" in Austria, and compensation for Allied property. By way of contrast, the public mind is confused by the quantity of conflicting material about Allied disagreements on Germany. All the four Powers are seeking ways of putting the blame on others. The Americans are alarmed that Russia may propose that all

Allied troops should evacuate Germany as a preliminary to setting up a centralised German government on whose nature the Allies would certainly not agree. The French want to detach the Rhineland from the rest of Germany, or failing this, to put it under international control. The Americans and British both want some form of loose German federation—the U.S. plans a Western German capital in Frankfurt—while the Russians argue that National Socialism will reappear as it did before, in Bavaria or some other semi-autonomous area, unless a centralised government is formed which can be more easily controlled by the Allies. This the Western Allies regard as a bid for German favour and for a government in Berlin which would in fact be subservient to the U.S.S.R. A head-on collision is apparently as certain on such issues as reparations, denazification, and the Ruhr as it is on the constitutional problem.

Mr. Bevin and Partition

As we suggested last week, the Americans and Russians at Lake Success are steadily narrowing their disagreements on the methods of enforcing partition in Palestine. Both now propose May 1 as the date on which British forces should cease to be responsible for law and order. Since complete evacuation could hardly be finished in under a year, this must mean that the British troops would be disengaged and concentrated in the £5 million barracks now being completed at Gaza. These barracks and the huge R.A.F. station at Lydda are part of the equipment which we shall have to leave behind in this strange political Dunkirk. What troops will replace the British? Certainly not Russian or American. The most hopeful proposal is still a police force composed of contingents from the smaller Powers. If this were accepted and if there were even passive co-operation from Mr. Bevin, partition could now be carried through with a minimum of confusion. But will this be forthcoming from Mr. Bevin, who is so far only on record as refusing to participate in partition? In a despatch from Jerusalem last Wednesday, published in the *News Chronicle,* Geoffrey Hoare foreshadowed the consequences of the present proposal to withdraw without handing over to Arab and Jewish authorities. It would mean that we should end our 25 years in Palestine by quite deliberately destroying everything which we have built.

Siamese Mussolini

The military *coup d'état* in Siam last week-end puts into power again the Siamese "Mussolini," Marshal Pibul Songgram. He was one of the original promoters of the *coup d'état* in 1932 and was Prime Minister during the Japanese occupation. It was in that capacity that he declared war on the Allies, although he had long been known for his pro-Japanese sympathies. After the Japanese surrender he was held under house arrest whilst evidence was being collected for the War Crimes Commission; he was then released on the order of the Bangkok High Court after the signing of the Peace Treaty with Britain. It had been suspected that he would stage a come-back, relying on his influence in the Army; and his forces had obviously been well trained to take over control of transport communications and broadcasting in Bangkok. The Prime Minister, Dhamrong Nawasawat, is believed to be in hiding, and so, too, is Luang Pradit, the Elder Statesman of Siam, who came to this country on a goodwill mission last December. Both men had the reputation of being democrats, and Dhamrong worked hard to lower the cost of living and to inject a certain measure of honesty into a corrupt administration. The new Premier, Luang Kavid Abhaiwongse, appointed by Marshal Pibul Songgram, who has placed himself at the head of a Military Council, held the same post under the Japanese and has considerable personal interests in rice. The coup marks a violent turn to the Right in Siam, and will no doubt provoke a corresponding resistance from the Left.

Kashmir

Now that Indian troops are well set in Kashmir, and are succeeding in pushing back the raiders from Srinagar, there is a strong case for their remaining until order has been restored in all those parts of the State accessible to military operations. But the longer they remain without agreement between the Dominions as to the ultimate future of Kashmir, the more difficult will a solution become. One course might be for both sides to waive the idea of a plebiscite, and to agree on an immediate division, by which the northern and predominantly Moslem part of the States would accede to Pakistan, and the area around Jammu, mainly Hindu, would join up with India. The difficulty in the way of this is that widespread looting by the raiders may have caused some sections of Muslim opinion previously favourable to Pakistan to shift their allegiance to the Sheikh Abdullah. If, then, a plebiscite remains the only practicable solution, it is essential that both sides should have confidence in its fairness. To obtain that confidence, it will be necessary for the plebiscite to be controlled and supervised by some outside agency—either a specially appointed body of British officers or a Uno Commission. In addition, peaceful conditions must be achieved, and to that end Pakistan must make up its mind to close its roads to Kashmir so that heavy equipment and transport cannot be brought to the aid of the invaders. If representatives of Pakistan are to be in Kashmir, they must be regular units present by agreement with India to assist in keeping order.

Spivs and Drones

In the absence of wage incentives or successful appeals to "patriotism," there are two, and only two, sanctions which can be applied in order to secure the re-deployment of man-power—economic pressure or police action. The original Control of Engagement Order relied on the first weapon; the new Order, issued this week, implies, but is not apparently intended to involve, the second. In the selected list of occupations declared to be unessential—the gambling industry, amusement arcades and night clubs—in which employers are required to render lists of their employees, a useful comb-out may be possible, provided essential work—and accommodation—can be found for directed persons. But, unless Mr. Isaacs intends to widen enormously his list of unessential occupations, this selective direction will cause much ill-feeling and do little to correct mal-distribution of labour. Without universal re-registration and the help of the police (which Mr. Isaacs insists he does not mean to invoke) there is little hope of netting the real spivs—a doubtful source of recruitment to industry in any case. As for the "unoccupied" well-to-do, if they feel that they are threatened with direction to useful and unpleasant labour—e.g., on the land—all they need do is promptly to become "occupied" in any of a hundred unessential jobs which carry exemption from registration.

The Electoral Swing

The recent Gallup Poll in the *News Chronicle* surveying the general feeling of the electorate, when taken in conjunction with the results of the municipal elections, provides valuable material for political stocktaking. An interesting analysis, in the letter published on another page from Mr. Geoffrey Bing, M.P., shows that there are lessons to be learned from it by Socialists, Conservatives and Liberals alike. For the Liberals it would appear that there is as yet no hope of their being an important factor in the next Parliament. The present swing is not sufficient to bring them more than two or three additional seats at the most. The Conservatives, too, have less justification for optimism than the original figures for the municipal elections might have warranted. Although only 40 per cent. of the Gallup sample openly supported the Government, previous between-election polls show that, when voting point in a General Election is reached, a higher proportion of the electorate do, in fact, vote for the existing administration—perhaps as many as ten per cent. more. But the greatest lesson is the one to be absorbed by the Government. Its public relations have indeed been poor when they have produced a situation in which 60 per cent. of the people are persuaded that the crisis is unavoidable, but, despite the crisis, 66 per cent. of them believe the food cuts to be unnecessary.

PARLIAMENT : The Churchill Touch

Wednesday

If anyone had expected a great debate last Monday on great constitutional issues, he was disappointed. Mayor-making in the boroughs kept the Chamber half-empty; and the debate nearly petered out before the adjournment, owing to a shortage of speakers. Mr. Herbert Morrison, who opened for the Government, was subdued both by the absence of "the chief witness"—Mr. Churchill—and by the dwindling interest on both sides of the House in 36-year-old quotations. The best speeches came from Quintin Hogg, who generalised a personal sense of grievance that a peerage will debar him from the premiership into a powerful attack on the anachronism of the hereditary principle; and from Dick Mitchison who made the Government case more concisely than any Front Bench speaker. There was no answer to it from the Tory side, and the only serious criticism came from Labour back benchers who wanted to go much further.

The House was full on Tuesday afternoon to hear Mr. Churchill. Once again he showed himself a master of polemics and actually contrived to transform the Tories' defence of their obvious advantage in the Lords into a glorious example of the clash between the will of a free people and the dictatorial incompetence of a little gang of place-seeking, partisan, party politicians, riddled with intrigue and defeatism. These speeches are composed according to the eternal and unchanging canons of successful propaganda: never vary your central theme, however irrelevant it is to the facts under discussion; contrive on every subject and every day to associate your opponents with a few simple bad ideas and your friends with a few simple good ideas. By endless, but infinitely varied repetition, you can thus create a political atmosphere in which the elector will believe that, since black is white and twice two is five, he has a simple and patriotic choice between native good and alien evil. Mr. Ede and the Prime Minister, as usual, found no difficulty in scoring points against Mr. Churchill in the Chamber; but once again it was Mr. Churchill who had won the ear of the public. He had made the Parliament Act into another Breugelesque detail on his grand altar piece—the Tory St. George rescuing a famished and nearly naked Britannia from the clutches of a dying but still snarling Socialist dragon.

Labour Ministers make a sad mistake if they write off these Churchillian orations as superb parliamentary performances and believe that they can be countered by merely stating the facts which they so flagrantly distort. What is needed are Government spokesmen who can also use Parliament as a sounding board for an appeal in simple and stirring terms to the public imagination.

The Overseas Development Resources Bill provoked little argument. In a careful, explanatory speech Strachey laid considerable stress on the benefit to be derived from the Bill by the colonial peoples, no doubt in order to offset some of his Department's previous propaganda which had laid more emphasis on the exploitation of the Colonies for our own benefit. Ivor Thomas spoke interestingly enough on the problems involved to obtain sympathy for his new positoin below the gangway. He perhaps slightly overstretched himself, in demanding a ceiling for salaries, when he said, "In these days of austerity let us be austere together, and let austerity start at the top. I suggest we make £5,000 a year the standard . . ." Rees-Williams, his successor, was competent and vigorous, and his success, together with that of Callaghan, was one of the encouraging features of the week.

PHINEAS INC.

DECISIONS ADJOURNED

Mr. Dalton would doubtless claim that in the fell grip of dollar shortage he has not panicked, that beneath the bludgeonings of Big Business and the dis-inflationists his head is bloody but unbowed. In fact, from a Socialist standpoint, his Autumn Budget—undramatic and psychologically undynamic—is redeemed by virtues of omission. He has had to give a little ground to reactionary pressure: combined with a "penny on the pint," the stiff increases in purchase tax on many articles which can hardly be classed as luxuries represent an undesirably regressive impost on working- and lower-middle-class incomes, even though they are balanced in the scales of fiscal justice by a doubled tax on industrial profits. Moreover, in terminating the price-subsidies on leather, cotton and wool, and announcing that this year's level of food subsidies is a top-limit, the Chancellor has wobbled, in principle, from the sound policy of maintaining stability of "essential" prices. But there has been no capitulation. By refusing, at any rate for the present, to cut the total figure of existing subsidies, Mr. Dalton has stoutly rejected the evil advice that he should curb inflation by soaking the poor; and, in deciding against any addition to duties on tobacco or extension of the range of purchase tax on consumer goods, he has, on the whole, resisted demands for "rationing by the purse."

Praise for the Chancellor may be mingled with some slight bewilderment. Was this the sort of Crisis Budget which the Cabinet (to whom the domestic consumer of electricity seemingly owes thanks for a last-minute reprieve) had in mind before the municipal elections pointed to the risks of unpopular measures, and the T.U.C. left Ministers in no doubt as to working-class reactions to a planned increase of 10-15 per cent. in the cost of living? Was it worth while to take next April by the forelock in order to add £48 millions to this year's £3,450 millions of budgeted Revenue? And has the imposition of this limited dose of fresh taxation on consumption, which will bring in only £208 millions in a full year, any important bearing either on inflation or the execution of the "all for export" Cripps Plan? In referring to the new betting taxes—a welcome source of income from which future Budgets might well draw much ampler grist—Mr. Dalton said in his broadcast that he was taxing football pools in the hope of securing from them the release of workpeople who could be more productively employed. We see little justification for this hope: prizes at 90 per cent. of their present level will still be sufficiently attractive; and, on the dog tracks, some betting may shift from totes to bookies. Similarly, purchase taxes which are stiff, but not prohibitive, will not do much to prevent labour being diverted from export manufacture. Dalton's Mild is *not* Cripps' Bitter.

The Chancellor argued, plausibly, that a supplementary Budget should avoid complexity; and he hinted that between now and next April he would study means to "re-adjust" the tax burden so as to afford needed reliefs and greater incentives. By that time, we agree, he should have a clearer view of future national resources (earned or likely to be lent) and of the trend of world prices. In the name of simplicity, however, he has adjourned many big decisions. He hinted that he would again budget for a surplus to keep inflationary tendencies firmly in check, and he spoke hopefully of reduced expenditure on Defence. But, though he referred in his speech to continuing gross inequalities of incomes and needs, he gave no indication whether he realises that an "energising" Budget cannot be framed without a levy on accumulated wealth.

THE GREAT DEBATE

I. Anglo-American Strategy

Why does political controversy nearly always rage most fiercely round issues which are already dead or irrelevant? To-day, for instance, we are still arguing the merits of the Bevin policy although that policy was bankrupted last March, when America had to take over British responsibilities in Greece and Turkey. The real issue is what shall replace it.

The Bevin policy grew naturally out of the Churchillian concept of an Anglo-American entente, which developed during the war. It assumed that the fifty-fifty Anglo-American partnership could be continued in peacetime. The English-speaking peoples would stand, like a two-headed Janus, protecting the world from aggression. While America assumed huge new commitments across the Pacific, Britain would retain the major responsibility for the Atlantic, Western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East, just as she had done during the war. The discontinuance of Lend-Lease, which had provided the economic basis for equality between America and Britain, would be balanced by the Loan to Britain. This would be sufficient to see her through the awkward period before the restoration of multilateral trade enabled her once again to reach solvency.

Some of us from the first were doubtful whether the status allotted to Britain by this policy could possibly be sustained. In the debate on the amendment to the King's Speech last November I argued that we could not carry the foreign commitments involved in the acceptance of a two-bloc world; if we tried to do so, we should go the way of France after the last war. For many months the *Keep Left* group has urged that, together *with* France, we should opt out of the ideological war, and seek to develop a European policy designed ultimately to create an independent and united Europe.

These ideas were dismissed as impracticable; our stress on the need for an immediate reduction of the armed forces in order to strengthen our economy was written off as defeatism; and our demand for a drastic curtailment of our overseas commitments, especially in Germany, the Levant and the Middle East, was turned down as entailing the sacrifice of "vital British interests." Even so late as the Margate Conference, Mr. Bevin still seemed confident that the status, claimed for Britain by Churchill during the war, could be maintained after it, in a world riven by American-Russian conflict.

But card votes cannot change the laws of history. This particular controversy has been settled by events. Having clung on for two years, during which he was still free to scale down our commitments as a deliberate act of will, Mr. Bevin is now forced to abandon them by sheer force of economic circumstance. Having imperilled our domestic reconstruction and export drive, through the size of our overseas spending, we are now compelled to cut our losses by an economic crisis which his policy has vastly aggravated. Choosing guns instead of margarine, we are now in sight of being deprived of both.

What is often overlooked is the effect in America of this surrender to circumstance. Our illusions of grandeur were readily accepted by the U.S.A., which for obvious reasons was unwilling to accept new commitments in Europe and the Middle East. The collapse of the policy based on those illusions precipitated a crisis in Washington which resulted in the Truman Doctrine. In order to justify to Congress the assumption of new and unwelcome responsibilities in Greece and Turkey, the President had to proclaim the ideological war and so to intensify the conflicts and divisions which prevent a restoration of British and European economy. When we complain of the Truman Doctrine, we must realise that it is a direct consequence of the vacuum caused by the collapse of British policy.

It is sheer waste of time to indulge in recriminations about past mistakes. The job now is to work out a policy commensurate with our strength and in accordance with the realities of American and Russian power politics. What we cannot afford is to continue to base our foreign policy on illusions.

The choice before us is well defined in a pamphlet by the Fabian International Bureau.* We can (1) join the Russian camp, (2) join the American camp, or (3) seek to form a group independent of both blocs.

As both Mr. Woolf and Mr. Ewer agree, the first of these choices is not practical politics. Western Europe, for some years to come, will be dependent on economic assistance from the New World; and anyway, the subordination of Britain to Russian policy is an intolerable idea. We are therefore left with the alternative between an American policy and a European policy.

This dilemma is debated at length in the Fabian pamphlet, Mr. Woolf pleading his case for an independent policy, and Mr. Ewer responding with a slashing defence of Bevinism. Both show a welcome recognition that the choice is not between good and evil, but between the greater and the lesser evil; and they would probably agree that they have posed the dilemma rather than answered it. Their aim is not to score points but to stimulate serious discussion.

Mr. Ewer advocates the acceptance of a modified form of the Truman Doctrine as the basis for British policy. He believes that to win "the cold war" and induce the Russians to make an overall settlement, we must maintain "a close, purely defensive association between Britain and America."

It is important to see what such an association involves for both Britain and America. A defensive alliance, in order to be effective, must be world-wide. Its aim must be to prevent Russian expansion by the threat that, if it happened in one area, the war would immediately spread to others. Suppose, then, that Russian aggression took place in Korea. Under this policy, we must be prepared immediately to open up Western Europe and the Middle East as new fronts.

It is no use arguing that the aim of the policy is to prevent a war and not to win it. "Collective security" cannot be mere bluff. It must involve actual preparation for the emergency which it seeks to prevent. If Britain enters such a defensive association, she must be prepared to honour her word to America, if the bluff is called.

Advocates of this policy—including Mr. Ewer—ride away from their critics with taunts of "appeasement." But they should realise that, this time, we in Western Europe might find ourselves in the position of the Czechs in 1938. For what guarantee have we, not of ultimate liberation, but of immediate American assistance in defeating the Red Army? That is a question which any responsible British statesman must put to Mr. Marshall before he can think of accepting for Britain the exposed strategic position which such a "collective security" system involves.

In a notable series of articles, Mr. Lippmann has raised this issue from the American point of view. Would America be wise to assume the unlimited financial and military commitments involved in an ideological war of indefinite duration? Is she prepared to feed for ten years the western half of a divided Germany? And to supply the colossal capital required to make it a going concern? Is she ready to replace British with American troops in Greece, or to assume the major role in holding the Middle East against Russian infiltration? And is she ready to do all these things in addition to her vast Far Eastern commitments in "the cold war" against Communism? A British statesman must ask these questions even more urgently than an American commentator, before he accepts the idea of a

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* *Foreign Policy* by Leonard Woolf, with a critical comment by W. N. Ewer. Fabian Publications, 2s.

"defensive association" with America. For the real danger of appeasement is that we may build a "collective security" system which crumbles away when it is tested by the threat of war. What finally encouraged Hitler to start the war was the realisation that the Western Powers were unwilling to honour their obligations to the Czechs. The Czechs have learnt a lesson from Munich; we could study that lesson with profit.

What is surprising is that, whereas Mr. Woolf and Mr. Ewer both make a careful analysis of Russian policy and Russian motives (and do not markedly disagree in their diagnosis), they seem to assume American foreign policy as something calculable and reliable. But whereas it is far easier to forecast Russian policy than to do business with the Russians, exactly the opposite is true of the U.S.A. We can talk to the Americans and do business with them, but it is almost impossible to forecast American policy from month to month. Indeed, the Constitution and the social structure of America rule out a foreign policy, in the European sense of those words.

To say this is not to criticise America, but to record a vitally relevant fact about American democracy. There can be no guarantee of a continuity of foreign policy except in wartime and under a strong President. All we can know is that every Administration must avoid any and every foreign commitment which it is possible to avoid, even if by so doing it may endanger vital national interests. American foreign policy will always be the lowest common denominator of the conflicting pressure groups within the nation.

A sober study of the American scene, therefore, should make us pause before we accept the risks involved in a formal or informal entente. Are we ourselves prepared, for instance, automatically to involve Western Europe in a Far Eastern conflict? Are we sure that, if we do expose ourselves in this way, the necessary military aid will be immediately forthcoming? Or is this new policy to be based, as its predecessor was, on mutual illusions? Whatever else the Russians may be, they are not innocents at the political poker table. They know a phoney when they meet one. The most certain way of provoking a shooting war is to proclaim a cold war without calculating the cost.

Moreover, if we want, as we all want, to rebuild Anglo-American relations on solid foundations, we must clear up these issues here and now. We are told that no political conditions will be attached to the Marshall aid programme. But there is an acute danger that the giver and the recipients will have quite different ideas about the unwritten conditions implicit in the programme. If Western Europe accepts it, as designed to enable us to achieve genuine political independence between the blocs, and if Congress votes it as a method of buying bases for anti-Russian operations in an emergency, no one will benefit from the misunderstanding except the Russians. Far better, even at the risk of reducing the amount of aid voted by Congress, to face these difficulties frankly in discussion between the two democracies than to receive the aid, as we received the loan, in a fog of mutual mistrust.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

(*To be continued.*)

BRITISH DESIGNS AND COLONIAL DOUBTS

THINGS are certainly on the move in the Empire. Parliament has agreed to the creation of two powerful colonial development corporations with capital resources of £150 millions, and the Governors of ten African colonies have met in London to discuss the political and economic future of Africa—the first time in history that such a conference has been called.

It is, of course, all part of the same process—the dissolution of the old concept of Empire, whereby millions were pressed down in subjection, and neglected or exploited according to the whims and pockets of private capitalists. One can argue backwards and forwards as to what is bringing this about. Is it the sincere fulfilment of the ideals held for generations by the Labour movement? Or is it the compelling force of economic adversity? The argument is a barren one, as barren as any argument on motives, because motives are usually mixed. Economic necessity brandishes its whip, and we are simply no longer able to hold down unwilling people who crave, above all, for their independence. We can no longer afford the existence of wildernesses and swamps and untapped minerals and unharnessed power in the lands we control. To open up their resources, we are dependent on the willing co-operation of the men who are to be asked to work. But there are ways and ways of grappling with difficulties. Under a Government with less sympathy for the colonial peoples, "colonial development" would have provided a glorious happy-hunting-ground for capitalist imperialists.

Today, confident in our own sincerity, we are full of hopes that we are going to manage these things well. That confidence was written large over the official spokesmen for the Overseas Resources Development Bill last week. The Bill sets up two new public corporations. The Colonial Development Corporation, which may draw on Treasury Funds up to £150 millions, has the object of developing the resources—particularly the primary resources—of the Colonies; it will be administered under the authority of the Colonial Secretary. The Overseas Food Corporation, with £50 millions at its disposal, will be responsible to the Minister of Food and will promote the production of foodstuffs not only in the Colonies, but anywhere overseas—special mention was made of Australia. Its first job will be to take over the East African groundnuts project, which, in spite of some initial delays and disappointments, is now gathering momentum.

This method of attack on economic backwardness is absolutely up Labour's street—the public corporation armed with large borrowing powers, indifferent to profit-making, under the direct control of the Minister and open to continuous Parliamentary scrutiny. Why be churlish, and not welcome it with open arms? Because the disquieting fact is there—and no irritation about "unreasonableness" will wave it away—that the people of the countries to be "developed" are revealing remarkably little enthusiasm. They remain cynical and suspicious. "All this is not for *our* benefit," they say; "it is to provide you with the things *you* need." One can argue until one is blue in the face that it is of mutual benefit, just because we are so desperately in need that they will get better prices—it is impossible to break through the wall of distrust against what seems to them just a bigger and better form of foreign exploitation. What can we do to inspire that confidence which—let us face it bluntly—is not ours?

Three causes for suspicion can easily be picked out. The first is that the new corporations are wholly British concerns—born of British imagination and initiative, financed by British money, designed to meet British requirements, and manned by British managers and senior staff. There are safeguards in the Bill about "particular regard to the interests of the inhabitants of the territory," but no mention whatever of *associating* these inhabitants, or eventually handing over control to them. The peoples are to work, be well paid and nicely cared for, and see a gradually increased flow of wealth to their country as the new exports, in time, bring in new goods in exchange—but none of the plans will be theirs. They will have no say, unless things work out differently on the spot from what the Bill provides. Is not it only human nature to stand aside critically if another man enters your home without a "by your leave" and starts painting your, admittedly shabby, walls in the best of taste, for your own good—particularly if it happens to be for his own good, too? This analogy is not quite fair, but it is how it *looks* to the colonial people.

The second cause for suspicion is the concentration of all these schemes on primary produce. The colonial peoples were among the worst sufferers from the collapse in the markets for primary products in the inter-war years. It became a slogan and an aspiration to "industrialise" and to develop "a balanced economy," which could stand a bit aloof from arbitrary world markets. Today the Colonies are very short of manufactured consumer goods. If we were to lay bold plans for industrialisation, they would see the goods emerging from the factories and be able immediately to purchase them, and that would be the conclusive answer to doubt. But here we come again (and, on economic grounds alone, we are quite right to do so) with the old primary produce business. Even if we guarantee prices, it will take time before the consumer goods in exchange pour into colonial markets and make the men who have produced the groundnuts and rice and what-not feel it has been worth their while. There is a strong case in favour of giving a high priority of British exports to colonial countries, so that the people can see how they are benefiting from the development schemes. Imagine the effect on unsophisticated minds if, while the fats came on to our markets, the corresponding textiles and pots and pans from Britain failed to appear, because they were all being shunted off to dollar countries! Not only would a dangerously inflationary situation develop, but confidence would have been destroyed and co-operation lost.

The third point of difficulty from the angle of the intelligent colonial is that, unless he is in control, how can he be certain what future British Governments might do with these mighty instruments? Perhaps, with Labour in power, they may act beneficently, guarantee good prices, protect the workers—but we all know the story of Frankenstein. . .

The mere enumeration of these suspicions shows what delicate handling is needed, how a political, as well as an economic, approach is essential if our good intentions—and they are good intentions—are not to miscarry. It is a pity, therefore, that the Ministry of Food is running the groundnuts scheme. No doubt there were organisational necessities which led to this arrangement, but the psychological effect on the colonials is bound to be bad. ("British food—that's all they care about.") And the officials of that department, whose whole job in life is to secure more food for Britain as cheaply as possible, can hardly be expected suddenly to develop split personalities—one for handling foreign food supplies and striking hard bargains; another for buying colonial goods with a heart softened in its tender regard for African or Asiatic peasants.

Just because these doubts still hover around our designs—and there has not yet been a convincing public announcement to dispel suspicion—the African Governors' conference comes opportunely. The Governors will be discussing these plans, and they will know, as well as anyone, of their repercussions on the colonial mind. More important still, this conference is to be the precursor to another of a quite unusual character, to be held next spring in London. That will be a gathering of *elected*, as well as official, members from the African Legislative Councils—again the first of its kind to be convened. We will then have a concourse of the chosen representatives of the people of Africa—in itself a major historical event—and they will certainly not hesitate to speak their minds. Not all these representatives are elected by direct ballot as we know it here, and in some East African lands and in N. Rhodesia there are no African representatives at all. That deficiency, too, will undoubtedly draw forth caustic comment when the time comes. But it is as far as we have yet gone, and one can take a safe bet that most of those who do come will not pull their punches. They will give us just that corrective we need in case we should be thinking—what with Development Corporations and £150 millions to spend and new constitutions right and left—that everything in the colonial garden is lovely.

RITA HINDEN

A LONDON DIARY

Displacing the over-ripe tomato from its pride of place, the potato has become a definitely political vegetable. Restriction of consumption to three pounds a head per week is a severe cut in the diet, particularly of working-class households; and I am afraid that John Strachey is, for the moment, one of the most unpopular people in the country. Yet the fault is not his. Last spring's floods, which ravaged thousands of our best potato-growing acres, were not of his creation, nor could he foresee that a summer of drought would result in a particularly light potato crop. I cannot follow Mr. Butcher's argument in the House on Monday that the Ministers of Food and Agriculture were guilty of gambling because they expected at least a normal yield and did not get more acres planted with potatoes after the flood disaster last spring. Even if the yield assumption was optimistic, could much more potato acreage have been secured without reducing the harvest of other equally essential foods? There may be more point to the charge that potato rationing, which is now the only alternative to complete exhaustion of stocks by February, was applied belatedly, after too much had gone into feed or black market hoards.. If so, the delay was not, I think, due to Mr. Strachey's miscalculation, but rather to a very human reluctance on the part of the Cabinet as a whole to take so unpopular a step when it could still be denounced as needless austerity. Where, perhaps, Strachey is vulnerable is in his continued reliance on competition in the greengrocery trade to keep prices in hand. This week's soaring prices of alternative root vegetables, such as swedes, carrots and parsnips, make one wonder whether he has not erred in deciding, so far, against the reimposition of price controls. Politically, however, what is probably most important is that, without stopping to think much about rights and wrongs, the public seems disposed to resent potato rationing just as if Mr. Strachey were making a personal corner in potatoes or applying austerity for austerity's sake. The fact that people who have good stocks of potatoes, or grow them in their gardens, can nevertheless draw the ration makes urban housewives particularly bitter. The fact is that, with every fresh shortage that is revealed, new "privileged" classes emerge. We shall soon be divided into those who have a rent-controlled house, a large patch of potatoes, supplementary allowances of petrol and those who are denied by Providence these economic advantages.

* * *

A traitor, says Warwick, to calm the Bishop of Beauvais in Bernard Shaw's *St. Joan,* means in our language "one who is not altogether devoted to our British interests." That is exactly how Mr. Churchill used the word in his reckless speech on Burma in the House of Commons. Reputable Tories shared with Liberal and Labour men a sense of shame that this old gentleman, once so high in national esteem, should apparently desire to wreck our relations with independent Burma. They pointed out that if the men who have emerged at the top in the countries of South-East Asia are "traitors," then George Washington, Michael Collins and General Smuts, also deserve the name. They, too, fought for their own countries against foreign domination. Aung San, who was murdered in company with his Cabinet, was willing to join with any force through which his country's liberation could be achieved. He took sides with the Japanese who were throwing the British out of Burma. When the Japanese were losing he switched over to the British side. A chequered career, of course, but British soldiers and administrators, who dealt with him in Burma, believed that he was a sincere patriot, and when he came to this country to negotiate with the British Government last winter he made the same favourable impression on the Prime Minister and his colleagues. I met him at the same time. He was a formidable little man, at first meeting singularly dour and suspicious, but relaxing after half an hour's conversation into good-humoured laughter. I found that he could take criticism once he was assured that his critic was treating him as an equal. Indeed, it was because his English friends criticised him bluntly instead of adopting the usual polite evasions that he decided to believe in their sincerity. His successor, Thakin Nu, a more immediately attractive figure, confided to me after a long political talk that he was even more interested in English literature than in politics. He himself writes plays and poetry. He and his able Chief Minister, U Tin Tut, confront great difficulties. Members of Parliament who welcomed Burmese independence but warned us not to expect Burma to have an easy passage, were well justified. Almost immediately after the debate, shots were fired at the Prime Minister; unhappily one English soldier was killed and another wounded. All we can say is that whatever happens in Burma, it is right that the Burmese should solve their own problems, and that those whose emotions prevent them sharing in the Burmese joy on Independence Day should keep silent.

* * *

Christopher Buckley scores a palpable hit in the correspondence columns of this journal to-day. If, as I assume, Mr. Buckley's facts are correct, the Polish censorship has become stricter in the last few months; indeed the Communist press in Poland must on this showing be now as untruthful as the anti-Communist Polish press in this country. But I fear that Mr. Buckley is incapable of making any fair assessment of these new Eastern European governments. People have forgotten that it was not our habit in Britain to protest when Left-wing politicians were imprisoned or executed before the war, and that most of the members of these governments spent long years in gaol under pre-war dictatorships. The case that some of us have been trying to explain is that these Eastern European countries now have revolutionary governments which are at last able to take in hand the reconstruction of backward feudal countries; that they have a right to protect themselves against Fascism and against those within and without the country who hope by intrigue to organise intervention from abroad; that, like other revolutionary governments, they are certain to go to unnecessary lengths to secure themselves; and that when they do so it is the particular duty of those who support them to urge the advantages of permitting a loyal opposition.

* * *

Only in the noble and disinterested game of chess have Anglo-Soviet relations been wholly successful since the war. There have been two matches between Britain and Russia; the recent contest at the Holborn Hall, in London, and a match by radio in June, 1946, arranged by the Anglo-Soviet Chess Circle. This group, which is an offspring of the S.C.R., is to be congratulated on producing a book on the radio match (*Anglo-Soviet Radio Chess Match,* by E. Klein and W. Winter, Pitman, 10s. 6d.), complete with annotated games, theoretical review of the openings, photographs and biographies of the players on both sides. In his introduction, Winter describes with austere enthusiasm how chess is organised in the Soviet Union, where there is a hierarchy of Grand Masters, Masters, Candidates, and some "300,000 players with official ratings." He rightly compares the professional and organised character of Soviet chess with our haphazard and dilettante set-up. Chess is so much part of education in the new civilisation of Russia that budding masters are not lost as in England; talent is drawn not only from the small privileged class but from every rank of society. The immediate British prospects Winter finds not too good, because, although we have some brilliant young players coming up and have developed a much more widespread interest in the game as a result of enforced leisure in the military and civil defence services during the war, our present masters are much too old and our attention to the game, in his view, much too dilatory. Indeed, Winter speaks with severity of those enthusiasts who "degenerate into the category of useful club and skittle players, of whom there are already far too many." His arrow pierces my bosom. I am one of these redundant degenerates. In the days of my youth, when there seemed time for everything, I was a humble member of a team of which Winter was captain. Since then he has been twice British champion, while I have degenerated into a mere skittle player. True, there are few things in life I have enjoyed more than the game of chess, but I must confess that it has always remained to me a game. I have allowed my thoughts to stray to Other Things, away from the straight and narrow path which leads the chosen few to Mastery or even Grandmastery. I can only hope that when these athletes of chess, these disciplined and ascetic zealots, undertake the organisation of chess in Soviet England they will temper justice with mercy in dealing with mere amateurs who, after all, provide them with an admiring audience and follow their games, if not with full comprehension, at least with pleasure mixed with awe.

* * *

S. K. Ratcliffe provides me with a quite new Sidney Webb anecdote. He remarks that Webb was not much given to talk about his life in the Colonial Office, still less about the earlier stage in the Inland Revenue, but he liked to tell the story of an interview with Robert Browning. Reading in the *Pall Mall Gazette* an interview with the poet, he noted that the poet lived in his district and, turning to his list, found that he was not assessed for income tax. In reply to a request Browning called at the office and informed the young inspector that he was not liable. How was that? Browning explained that his own poetry was quite unremunerative, and that the publishers allowed him a small annual sum on account of his wife's poems, then being widely read. (This was in the 1880s.) Becoming rather testy under Webb's polite questioning, Browning declared that if he was to be bothered by revenue officials he would give up his London residence and live all the time in Italy. In those days income tax was an easier business and Webb seems not to have pursued the matter further.

Critic

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to P. F. Ganz.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The fact that revisions are needed at this stage, nearly 160 years after the first issue of M.C.C. laws in 1788, shows that the game is still growing and capable of further development, which from a Marxist point of view, is noteworthy.—*Daily Worker.*

Mr. ———, manager of the ——— Hotel, said yesterday: "We look upon ourselves as a kind of nursing home for magnates of industry who want to restore their health. The hotel will remain open because we feel we have a very high mission to fulfil."—Report in *News Chronicle.*

Lady Munnings tells me that, contrary to rumour, she has no intention of taking her peke, Black Knight, to the Royal Wedding.—*Evening News.*

Alderman R. L. Constantine (Accrington) said that when it appeared Princess Elizabeth would be without a home of her own he was going to move that the County Council should offer her a pre-fab., even at the expense of some poor people who needed it more.—*Liverpool Echo.*

I have just come across a brilliant idea which I feel it my duty to pass on to all fathers immediately. It is nothing less than the perfect toy to keep children quiet ! You put the child (age about three) in the bath and pour in a pound of sprats.—Letter in *Daily Express.*

THE MIND OF GERMANY

WHEN I review my memories of a four months' stay in Germany, I realise that one imperious question has to be answered first. Is German militarism still a danger? On the physical plane the answer is easy. Out of the rubble of these ruined cities, from this decimated and exhausted population, no aggressor can arise in our generation. For years to come, disarmed as Germany is, the worst that could happen would be that in a general war she could furnish, to one side or both, some cannon-fodder.

In what mood would her people face such a choice? It is constantly in their thoughts. The fear of an early war has become a nightmare; incessantly men guess and women shudder, while rumour magnifies the most trifling indications. The majority view the prospect with horror, for everyone realises that Germany would be the battlefield and that little of what the last war spared would remain intact. One able group of intellectuals is discussing the not very practical suggestion that Germany should claim the status of a permanent neutral.

The exceptions to this pacific mood are the refugees from the lost provinces, who form a fifth of the whole population. They have lost their farms and their homes and they realise that in war lies the only prospect of recovery. Most of them are in great misery, some still housed in camps, others in overcrowded schools. They cling with unruffled confidence to the belief that they will see their own homes again, and that soon. By chance one day we gave a lift in our car to an East Prussian Junker, who turned out to be a very pleasant guest; as he left us, he assured us that he hopes one day to return our hospitality on its own estate. Other motives may reinforce this irredentist tendency. We heard a Catholic Professor of Philosophy, himself in priestly orders, calling for war on Russia to restore "the spiritual values" she has undermined. A young man, whose own opinions are pacifist, told us that the women of his family will expect him to fight to avenge his sister, who was raped by Russian soldiers. There is said to be an underground organisation composed of ex-officers from these Eastern provinces, who will offer their services to the Western Powers should war break out. There is a contrary school of thought which argues that Germans, given their talent for organisation and science, can do better for their country, and themselves, by selling their brains to Russia: America does not need them. This tendency may be growing, particularly in the Eastern Zone, but as yet I believe that the great majority of Germans would side with the West if they had to choose, bitterly though it has disappointed them. But, let me repeat, they dread war—as who would not amid these ruins?

May one go further and draw the conclusion that public opinion has swung over positively to a pacific and democratic view of life? On the surface everything is reassuring. The printing-press talks democracy—but it is censored. In every elected body, ranging from the governments of the Länder to the trade unions and works councils, every seat is held by democrats, and the leaders are men who have proved their sincerity by their steadfastness under persecution. May one assume that these men and their parties enjoy the confidence of the man in the street? Are they likely to retain it, or must we fear a nationalist reaction? That will depend more on the victors than on the German leaders. If life goes on as it does today, with no prospect of the attainment of a tolerable standard of life and the recovery of national unity, then in German eyes these parties and the principles for which they stand will be doomed by their association with hunger and stagnation. Germans can be won for democracy only if it has a message of hope to bring them.

The future has been gravely compromised by the procedures adopted for denazification. It was right and necessary to deal drastically with the leaders of the Party and the war criminals, and to exclude active and responsible Nazis from every position of authority and trust. In this matter what one has to regret is the long delay of justice: after two years and a half there are still about 20,000 persons interned without trial in the British, and 30,000 in the American Zone. But was there any sense in dragging the ordinary members of the Party and its affiliated charitable organisations before special tribunals, and subjecting them to punishments which ranged under the Americans from a small fine up to fifty days of forced labour? A high proportion of these members joined under pressure, for no business could be conducted otherwise; others aimed at safety or at advancement in their professions. After the crash the great majority of these people, average men who swam with the tide, wished to forget that they had ever had any connection with the Party. The wise course would have been to let them forget it: they were ready to rally to the new order. Was anything gained by branding them as former Nazis and stamping their identity cards with a mark of shame? During the long-drawn investigations, which may go on for another year or two, they could engage only in unskilled work in subordinate positions—a provision which has seriously disorganised production. In one Land, Hessen, which may be taken as typical, 27 per cent. of the adult population had to appear as defendants before these Courts, which means, if one reckons their wives and dependants, that at least 60 per cent. of the adult population was affected. Inevitably, as they awaited their sentences, a new sense of solidarity united them—and united them against the democratic regime and the democratic parties. A surer way of rendering the new order unpopular could not have been devised.

The political thinking which underlay this sorry business of denazification was altogether too *simpliste*. One cannot uproot German militarism by inflicting punishments on individual Nazis. The roots lay deeper—in the peculiar class-structure of Germany; the survival of feudalism in rural Prussia; the overgrown power of the great industrial combinations and the barriers of class that distorted the educational system. It was the gross disparity in the division of the product of industry between the monopolistic owning class and the mass of the wage-earning consumers which fatally led to a policy of territorial expansion. The Russians—though they may have done their work ruthlessly and clumsily—have understood this better than the Western Powers. American opposition may account for our failure to socialise the heavy industries of the Ruhr. But how are we to account for the choice of Wilhelm Roelen as the director of the coal mines, a man whose record, as a leading figure in the Thyssen industrial and financial network and as a manager for the Nazis in occupied Holland, promises the survival of an accursed tradition. Again, while we have banished Nazi teachers from the universities and higher schools, we have done nothing effective as yet to open their doors to the workers' children. Until that is done, the professions will be dominated by the nationalistic tradition of the old ruling caste.

No one who realises how completely the Nazis atomised German society and put an end to political thinking, will expect rapid progress in the democratic education of this people. Only a minority of the citizens are seriously interested in the work of the new parties. The average voter—including the women, who amount to two-thirds of the electorate—is absorbed in the crude struggle for survival. And why should he concern himself overmuch with parties which enjoy only a limited range of action? He is too confused to embrace any party with conviction, and experience has taught him that membership of a party may be dangerous. So it happens that in Würtemberg-Baden, to take a typical case, only 2 per cent. of the population have joined any party at all. Of these, in round figures, 50 per cent. are Social-Democrats, 40 per cent. are Communists, and the remaining ten per cent. are divided between the Christian Democrats (C.D.U.) and the Liberals. When it comes to voting, however, the Communists are a feeble minority, while the C.D.U., thanks to the support of the Church, are the largest party.

The C.D.U. with the allied Christian Social Union in Bavaria, has at present an absolute majority in the three Western Zones taken together. Save in Bavaria, where there is a strong peasants' league, it can hardly be regarded in its organisation as a democratic party. A high French official, who said that in every emergency its leaders go for orders to the nearest Bishop, may not have been far wrong. It is adamant in its demand for confessional schools. Speaking broadly, it is the party of property and includes an appreciable number of Conservative Protestants. It has, however, a Catholic Left Wing, which has given it some able and popular leaders, Arnold in the Ruhr, Kaiser in Berlin, and Baumgartner in Bavaria. It is not in principle opposed to every measure of Socialisation and has, in fact, voted in the Ruhr for the nationalisation of the mines. Its dangerously reactionary tendencies are incarnated in Dr. Hundhammer, the powerful Education Minister of Bavaria, who stands for its ancient tradition of particularism, resists the abolition of fees in its schools, has reintroduced corporal punishment, and is trying to redistribute the refugees from the East, so that the Protestants among them shall not corrupt the faith of the Catholic villages. The Liberals, nowhere a decisive factor in the balance of power, stand for secular education and incline towards *laissez-faire*.

The Social-Democrats are once again what they were in the past, a disciplined and highly organised party. The older survivors still incline to be doctrinaire and narrow in their allegiance, with the result that there is some tension in their relations with the younger generation. But they retain their old virtues: they think, they read and they work hard. New tendencies have emerged while the Party lived dangerously underground. Its Socialism is now primarily ethical in its outlook. At a conference held in August at Ziegenhain it passed a remarkable resolution which declared that Marx was "one-sided" in his stress on the economic interpretation of history and called for a wider outlook, in which ethics and religion would have their place. It has so far modified its traditional attitude to religion that it has been negotiating, with success, to secure the support of some of the more progressive Protestant Churchmen. It aims, too, as it never did before, at winning the technicians and other members of the impoverished middle class for a less dogmatic statement of Socialism, which lays due emphasis on the freedom and worth of the individual.

Among its leaders are to be found some new recruits who reflect these tendencies, notably Professor Karl Schmid, a jurist of Tübingen, a Catholic by faith, a winning personality and a man of bold and creative imagination. On its fringe, though not yet in its ranks, there is at least one notable group of intellectuals, the "Action Group" of Heidelberg, with Professor Jaspers at its head. This group is campaigning against "P.R." and the list system, which gives excessive power to the party machines. Dr. Kurt Schumacher, a dynamic personality with a superb record of courage and endurance under persecution, retains his position as the unchallenged Party leader, though to critical hearers his speeches seem too emotional. While the Party is broadening its appeal, it retains the loyalty of the mass of the industrial workers, who were its backbone in the past. The rivalry of the Communists—to whom the Socialists devote far too much attention—is serious only in the Ruhr. The workers, it seemed to me, have lost much of their old self-confidence and sense of power. The Socialists have reasonable hopes of improving their position at the next election. But that will not happen if we allow the Americans to veto the socialisation of the dangerous heavy industries; nor will it happen if we shatter their hopes of a tolerable future by dismantling essential industrial plant.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

THE SURVIVAL OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

It falls, this week-end, to the Social Democrats of Czechoslovakia to take decisions which will have an important bearing on Socialist policy in Europe—or at any rate in Central Europe. Their annual Congress precedes similar conferences of the Polish and Hungarian Socialist Parties, and is being held on the eve of the meeting at Antwerp of the International Socialist Congress, at which the question whether the Second International should be revived will be discussed. This particular project seems unlikely to secure support from the Czech Social Democrats, most of whom recall too vividly the powerlessness of the old Second International to save their country from the "betrayal" of Munich. The significance of the current Congress in Prague is that the Czech Social Democrats must now finally decide how they stand in a National Front which is showing, since the Separatist conspiracy and the constitutional crisis in Slovakia, a marked tendency towards polarisation between Left and Right.

The Social Democrats are the oldest of the Czech political parties and, under the leadership of Dr. Fierlinger, they played a leading role in the first post-war Coalition Government of the Republic, especially in the field of nationalisation and economic planning. In the May, 1946, elections they suffered a setback; as in France, the organised working class had begun increasingly to adhere to the Communist Party. The election results tended to strengthen the Right wing of the Party. Criticism from this quarter became vocal that Fierlinger's policy of close collaboration with the Communists in the National Front was prejudicing the Party's electoral position; and some Deputies even began to form anti-Communist blocs in their constituencies. In Parliament, signs of divorce between the Social Democrats and the Communists began to be visible, particularly in the Committee dealing with land and farming problems. On a number of issues, during the early summer, Social Democrats joined with the Right in voting against proposals tabled by the Communist Minister of Agriculture; and, in September, the split between the two Left Parties was emphasised by disagreement over the proposed levy on large fortunes to finance an Agricultural Assistance Fund.

At this stage Fierlinger made a move which has led to criticism within the Social Democrat Party. He took the initiative in opening negotiations with the Communists for a renewed pact of close collaboration. The conclusion of this pact, which, at any rate, held together temporarily a National Front whose solidarity would have been broken irrevocably by Communist isolation, was not announced to the Party by its Secretariat until after the news of it had been released by the Communists. This caused considerable resentment within the Party. Vilim, the General Secretary, who (according to his own statement), played the leading part in the negotiations with the Communists, is clearly responsible to a large extent for what would seem to have been a piece of political ineptitude. The Right wing of the Party, however, has ascribed the whole blame to Fierlinger and Erban, the Secretary-General of the Trade Union Movement. As the leaders of the Left wing of the Party, they are accused of planning, behind the Party's back, either fusion with the Communists or an alliance on terms which would rob the Social Democrats of any substance of independence.

At the current Congress the Right wing of the Party will endeavour at all costs to prevent the re-election of Fierlinger as President. They will argue that, just as the Hungarian Socialist General Council has emphasised its "independence" by virtually superseding its Left-wing General Secretary, Szakasits, so the Czech Party should have a leader—possibly Lausmann—who is not compromised by collaboration with the Communists. Naturally the Party is being exhorted by the National Socialist and Catholic Party press to change its leadership and thus avoid being "swallowed up by the Communists"; and, though the Left wing of the Party includes a number of influential trade union officials and the majority of the Socialist Women's Organisations, the outcome of the leadership issue is far from certain.

The real question, however, which confronts the Czech Social Democrats goes far deeper than personalities or the debatable tactics which led to the confusion, within the Party, over last September's pact with the Communists. Fusion, it seems, is not now desired either by the Communist Party or by Fierlinger; the notion that Moscow demands fusion appears to have been sedulously put about by the Right wing of the Party, aided not a little by propaganda from the West. The real issue is whether the Party is to endeavour, as its Right wing urges, to form, against the Communists, a working alliance with the middle-class National Socialist Party. Can a "third force"—Schumacher's phrase now adopted by the French Socialists under M. Blum —be thus formed in Czechoslovakia?

The attitude of the National Socialists in making common cause with the Catholic Party and the Slovak Democrats in the abortive National Front Conference on the Slovakian crisis last week, would seem to many observers to exclude this possibility. Nevertheless, the Right wing of the Social Democrat Party will doubtless make capital out of the indiscriminately brusque and aggressive tactics of the Communists in the present opening phases of the General Election campaign, and they will contend that the Party must vindicate its belief in democracy, as well as Socialism. On the other side there must be reckoned the strong sense within the Party of community with the Slav nations to the East, and the realisation that if the Party were to risk the adventure of entering what would be, in fact, an anti-Communist bloc, it would lose all hold of its remaining trade union support and could never effectively compete with the National Socialist Party in winning anti-Communist middle-class votes. The moral of the fate of Bulgarian Social-democracy under Lulcev and Pastuchev can hardly be overlooked. Whether or not the Czech Social Democrats go as far as the Polish Socialist Party in making common cause with the Communists as members of a united working-class front, they will be singularly unwise if they fail to see that, in their situation, the "third force" is not a viable assumption and that Social Democracy in Czechoslovakia can only regain lost ground among the organised workers, and thus play the valuable role which is open to it in the democratic development of the Republic, if it stands uncompromising as a Left Party.

AYLMER VALLANCE

CAT AND HANGMAN

Who could have imagined that this immensely powerful Government, containing probably more idealists to the square vote than any of which there is biographical record, would reject the opportunity afforded by a great penal reform Bill to abolish the death penalty? Clearly, the Home Office must believe they have a logical (as distinct from an emotional) answer ready for the amendment which is to call for abolition in the names of over 200 M.P.s, and are to take their stand on firmer ground than the usual claims that hanging is "more humane" than life imprisonment, and that the murderer in the abolitionist countries is treated with a shocking severity not acceptable to public opinion here—the former being hypocritical and the latter untrue. It would be as well, however, if there were a more general awareness that in this country "life imprisonment" does not mean imprisonment for life. Fifty years ago a Home Secretary told the Commons that, in the case of a prisoner who earned his full remission marks for conduct, it meant 26 years 8 months. It is nowhere prescribed; but in modern practice "life" sentences are reviewed at 7, 10, and 15 years; and, while few murderers do more than 15, some in fact do less. Whole-life confinement is resorted to only in the case of incurable criminal lunatics, whom no punishment can deter and no hope of clemency reform. It is reasonable to say that no one should enter this controversy until he has read the Report of the Select Committee on Capital Punishment (1930), which was downright and emphatic to the point of eloquence in recommending (indeed almost *demanding*) that we end the disgrace of being one of the few countries in the civilised world that persist in killing their criminals. If a copy of it could go to every household in the country, the rope-and-scaffold advocates might well be reduced, numerically, to the status of flat-earthers and Baconians, whose impenetrable sincerity is untroubled (though not necessarily unaccompanied) by intelligence and imagination.

Perhaps it was felt that the proposal to deprive the courts of all power to impose flogging sentences would load the Bill with as much controversy as it could carry in a session (it was too much for the last one). This will be the opening battle—the challenge is in Clause 2. In the first Clause, which proposes the "abolition of penal servitude, hard labour, and prison divisions"—a mere matter of discarding names, the distinctions they stand for having lapsed years ago—there is nothing to argue about. But Clause 45 provides for the retention of flogging for "a male person serving a sentence of imprisonment, corrective training, or preventive detention" if he commits an act of "mutiny, incitement to mutiny, or gross personal violence to an officer of the prison." The flogging order must come from a meeting of not more than five nor less than three members of the visiting committee (two of them being J.P.s) who have had evidence on oath about the prisoner's breach of discipline; and it will require the confirmation of the Home Secretary, to whom the full evidence and a copy of the order must be sent. There is little change in all this, although one anomaly that disappears is that by which a man sentenced to ordinary imprisonment (as distinct from "penal servitude") cannot lawfully be flogged for indiscipline unless he is serving a sentence for felony; if his original offence was conspiracy to murder, possessing house-breaking implements, perjury, or false pretences he cannot be flogged for indiscipline because these are "misdemeanours," but he forfeits such immunity, as a felon, if he is in for stealing a pound of apples. (Why, oh why will they not put in a brief clause abolishing the archaic distinction between felony and misdemeanour? It would wipe out countless administrative anomalies and harm no one.)

The flogging debate will focus itself on robbery with violence: the floggers always settle on this. Let it be said, in justice to them, that they are unlikely to press for the retention of the whip for unlicensed cattle-slaughterers, people found "sleeping out" for a second time, deer stalkers in forests, or even embezzlers; and they may now have moved far enough to see the block-headed futility of whipping sexual perverts and procurers. They may even allow themselves to be weaned away from the modern educational institution whose delayed-action apparatus is a bunch of 3ft. birch-twigs soaked in water, three sullen and reluctant policeman, and the trouserless behind of a small boy. But there's only one way of treating robbery with violence, they will say. The cat. And when it is demonstrated to them, on the figures supplied by the 1938 Departmental Committee on Corporal Punishment, that flogged robbers repeat their crimes more often than unflogged, they will fall back on the emotional demands of "natural justice," by which they mean the elemental desire for vengeance (provided someone else does the flogging). There is no message for them in the fact that corporal punishment was abolished long before the war (with no resultant increase in crimes of violence) in Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Scandinavia, France, pre-Nazi Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, in 34 of the States of America, and throughout the U.S.A. for Federal offences. They are more likely to take their stand on the fact that all the Dominions and Colonies authorise flogging, a favourite maximum among them being 50 strokes at *each of three floggings.* (Southern Rhodesia prescribes flogging for witchcraft.) People outside the Anglo-Saxon countries hear of this with horror and amazement. Great Britain and the Dominions will probably be asked next year, by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, to sign an international convention containing an Article to the effect that "no person shall be subjected to torture in any form, or to cruel or inhuman punishments." Shall we then have to maintain that flogging is not torture and (in the hearing of delegates from all the countries where it is no more than a barbarous memory) that it is neither cruel nor inhuman? Even if this Bill passes as it stands, we shall have to defend—almost alone—our desire to flog recalcitrant prisoners. It is significant that flogging is more prevalent in some of our prisons than in others, and that when a Governor is transferred the flogging often follows him round.

There seems to be no provision in the Bill for the payment of psychiatrists to whom offenders go for treatment as a condition of a probation order or a period of liberty on bail. Not even the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, whose work in this field is incomparable, will be rescued from "voluntary aid," because it is not to be recognised as a qualified authority under the National Health Service Act. Psychiatrists have been giving their services in this way for years, rewarded solely by the material they acquire for their case-books and the gratitude of the growing number of enlightened magistrates who seek their aid.

Among the new provisions about young offenders is a proposal to supersede the hopeless and slipshod expedient of short-term imprisonments by establishing "detention centres," to which those over 14 and under 21 can be sent for not less than three and not more than six months, to serve a sentence under modified Prison Act conditions—including the recording of their finger-prints. A disturbing feature of this scheme, which could have salutary results in administering a jolt to the youth who has got into the way of counting on a "binding-over," is that the detention centres will not, apparently, be schools. A child sent to an "approved school" continues his education. With the school-leaving age raised to fifteen, a fourteen-year-old may go to a detention centre for a few months and then return to his school to try to take up his education where, at a vital stage, it was interrupted. Many people will be interested to hear, when the details of this proposal are filled in by a Government spokesman on the Bill's second reading, whether the teaching problem has been worked out. At the very best it can only be a compromise, and it would surely be better to fix the minimum age for these short "detentions" at fifteen.

Mention of finger-prints calls to mind an odd criticism that has appeared in some newspapers about the proposal in Clause 33 to empower magistrates to make an order, on the application of a police inspector, that an accused person's finger-prints be taken before he is released on bail. "Many an English eyebrow will be raised in horror," according to one leader-writer, "at the thought that, at a magistrate's discretion, an innocent man may now have his finger-prints taken." English eyebrows have long been accustomed to the fact that, at a magistrate's discretion, an innocent man may be remanded in custody for a week instead of being allowed bail; and one of the most frequent reasons for this has been the man's own refusal to help in the proof of his innocence by letting the police take his finger-prints before going to court, and thus establish that he has no criminal dossier. An Englishman can so refuse but, since the Scottish judges decided (in *Adair v. M'Garry*, 1933) that the police have a Common Law power to take finger-prints by force, a Scotsman cannot. The object of remanding to prison (in this connection) is to enable the prison authorities to take finger-prints by force, which at present the English police cannot do in any circumstances whatever. Not even the prison Governor, however, can do it of his own authority: he must be authorised in writing by the Home Secretary or a J.P. It is convenient that, in London, the Assistant Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police are themselves sworn as J.P.s and can authorise prison Governors accordingly. But which is more consonant with the "liberty of the subject"—a week in prison as an unconvicted man or five minutes in a room at a magistrate's court and then release on bail? The finger-prints of an innocent man are destroyed when he is acquitted; they are in any case quite useless, since no police witness giving evidence of "previous convictions" dare make any mention of a previous acquittal. Clause 33 should end a practice that has often been abused, not set the watch-dogs barking over a much fairer proposal which, because it is new, they naturally feel it their duty to suspect. The truth is that this great Bill shows, on the whole, a scrupulous regard for personal liberties.

C. H. ROLPH

The Arts and Entertainment

AT COVENT GARDEN

THE new season at Covent Garden has opened with a good deed and a naughty one. The good deed is *Peter Grimes*, which no one should miss, whether or not he has seen the Sadler's Wells production. The present revival concentrates attention almost entirely on the raw and sinister atmosphere of our solitary national opera, and its rapturous reception shows that it has brought home to the public with great theatrical force this aspect of the composer's genius. Tanya Moiseiwitsch is determined that we shall feel the full impact of the elements—fog, lashing gale, the vast East Anglian sky; so much so, indeed, that in definance of the libretto she has cut us altogether adrift from the land: we see neither church nor pub nor moot-hall, only a great diagonal wooden pier stretching away into the haze or the gloom, and in the foreground a confusion of fishing tackle. The general effect is atmospherically beautiful and mysterious, but there is inevitably some loss as well as gain; we lose the sense of Crabbe's Borough, of the comings and goings of daily life in which everyone knows everyone else's business, gossips are always peering from behind half-closed shutters, and a few reeling steps will bring the revellers of the last act from the subscription dance in the moot-hall to the cosy squalor of The Blue Boar.

On the other hand, the bold setting of the hut scene on top of a visibly dangerous cliff is pure gain; Peter now dreams of happiness seated on the cliff edge with his eyes on the distant horizon, an effect which brings out all the poetry of this lovely passage. The fundamental idea of the work—the conflict, in rough and pitiless surroundings, of mob and individual—takes on a clearer and more ominous meaning from the mere size of the chorus and its dynamic handling by the producer, Tyrone Guthrie; and it was his vigorous realisation of this idea that gripped the audience. It was unfortunate that so many lyrical beauties of the score, which were memorable at Sadler's Wells, should have been obscured; and attention must be drawn to these, since most of them can be rectified with no great difficulty. To begin with, it was a gross and painful error to have instructed (or allowed) Constance Shacklock, as Mrs. Sedley, to *croak* her entire part, as though she were the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* or Papagena before rejuvenation. The Vicar's delicious Schubertian "good-night" in Act III went for nothing, partly because he was too far away, on top of the pier; and so did Balstrode's "Live and let live" song in the pub (so touching at Sadler's Wells) in the course of which Auntie was allowed to distract our attention by a series of hefty sneezes; but in both cases it must be admitted that the singers are less good than their predecessors. On the first night the two great "man-hunt" choruses of the last two acts were also, unexpectedly, less electrifying, because less precise; and the A major "everyday" chorus which opens the first act missed fire simply because the tune didn't come across. It was perhaps a wise decision of Karl Rankl to hand over, after the first performance, to Reginald Goodall, who had realised the score so splendidly with the more modest resources of Sadler's Wells. With repetition, chorus and orchestra will doubtless make the most of their great opportunities; the two principal parts remain in the safe hands of Joan Cross and Peter Pears, both of whom seem to have enriched and deepened their impersonations.

In *Peter Grimes* Covent Garden is admirably fulfilling its functions, but I cannot see that the new production of *Rigoletto* is anything but a stupid misuse of public money: what on earth is the point of putting on a work already in the repertory of both London's other opera houses? Even absolute superiority on all counts could hardly justify such folly; nor is this achieved. James Bailey's mounting is very handsome, and I was impressed by chorus, orchestra and the conducting of Peter Gellhorn; but the soloists are uneven, and the production tame beside Ebert's vital handling of the work at the Cambridge Theatre. Kenneth Neate warms up to the Duke's music in the last act; and Silveri sings finely, in spite of the handicap of a foreign tongue and of Lady Macfarren's version, unforgivably used instead of Professor Dent's. On the other hand, Elda Ribetti's Gilda, though reasonably accurate, is, for an Italian, curiously "white" and low-spirited.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THE THEATRE

"The Taming of the Shrew"—The Old Vic Theatre Company at the New Theatre

This excellent but truncated play, of which certain scenes may be in part the work of Shakespeare, has been reconstituted into a most agreeable evening's entertainment without the help of any wholly first-rate acting, if we except the hints given by Renée Asherson of what she might have done with another part than Bianca in another play than this and if we admit that in Bernard Miles there exists an English actor who in another country might not be overshadowed by the suburban charm of innumerable dim juveniles. Did Mr. Burrell get the idea of casting Mr. Miles as the drunken tinker Sly from hearing him as the tramp-narrator of Capek's *Insect Play*? Despite a brief identity of situation, the two parts have little enough in common. Capek's tramp had all the lyricism which Mr. Miles so oddly combines with that rough, slow intensity and "off" accent which condemn him to an eternity of small parts in a theatre whose every protagonist is assumed to represent the middle class. "A Pleasant Conceited Historie called the Taming of a Shrew" must have contained a last scene in which Sly, returned to his former condition, wakes again greatly edified and full of Heideggerian resolve in respect of his own wife. Whether or no this scene was retained in Shakespeare's acting version, it was never printed, and, when the play is acted now, after the first few minutes Sly is left to remind us of his existence by wordless crowing and gesticulation between scenes. The purest folk-theme Shakespeare ever touched is thus unhappily thrown away. The Italianate comedy which remains is dressed with better Italian than Shakespeare's, and, in the courtship of Bianca and Lucentio, very charming Latin.

Mr. Burrell's comic invention is copious, though not unlimited. Sometimes, as in *The Alchemist*, it submerges his play. I do not think it does so here, and there is much to be said for the independence permitted to such minor characters as Peter Copley's Tranio, who plays in a music-hall idiom quite outside the period. At the same time, Patricia Burke and Trevor Howard might have found it easier to dominate the play without Mr. Relph's ears and some other incidental pleasures. Mr. Burrell had arranged for Miss Burke and Mr. Howard only one of his special acrobatic exits (far less well-timed than Justice Shallow's in *Henry IV*) and one piece of adagio display, and indeed, generally, after the first wooing, he seems to have adopted towards their scenes together a policy of *laissez faire.* In any case, the supposedly bad old days of the actor-manager are now all too far behind us, and Shakespeare has fallen into the hands of the producers, both canon and apocrypha.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

RADIO NOTES

A GOOD thing about the B.B.C. is that it contains a number of people who can, on appropriate occasions, refrain from "using the medium." I am thinking about the exemplary broadcast on the Ruhr in the series called "Window on Europe." Like the earlier "Focus on Germany," it presented a serious subject with fitting austerity, and without concession to the idle listener. It began and ended with music, and there was a grim intrusion of jazz, but these were merely the correct disposition of relevant material. The body of the programme consisted of interviews with Germans. Messrs. Waldron, Tilsley and Small were right in allowing these to be a bit repetitive; how else could that picture of monstrous horror and privation be accurately built up? There were some terrible moments, notably the cabaret scene; but nothing was more terrible than the conviction of a young man who, claiming to speak for eighty per cent. of German youth, said: "I will get out of this country as soon as I can." There was a good deal about the black market. I still wonder if many English people know much about the black, as distinct from the grey, market; the European varieties might themselves offer "Focus" or the "Window" series an opportunity for valuable research and presentation; the phenomenon of the unhonoured ration-card, as in Italy or France, is one which everyone should know about.

The Sunday morning "Critics" are now firmly established. There have been excellent performances by Mrs. Arnot Robertson (welcome back!), Mr. Walter Allen, Mr. Philip Hope-Wallace and Mr. Eric Newton; some of the others have been noticeably less good. The whole programme is, I think, symptomatic of the B.B.C.'s nervousness about criticism: it must be made jolly and stingless. Mrs. Robertson's asperities must be softened by banter, a book must only be noticed if it is a good book, important bad books being commonly avoided. I don't myself see the point of the guest in these programmes; and I think the intensity of the programmes themselves would be increased if they were confined to Films, Theatre and Radio, and if Books and Art were put elsewhere. Incidentally could anything be odder than the B.B.C.'s masochistic choice of radio-critics? The principle of selection seems to be to comb the address books for people who have never, up to now, listened to anything except the news and Mr. Churchill. May I recommend some of the Third's guest-critics for inclusion in the Jubilee "How to Listen"?

Another, perhaps more enduring, problem nowadays faces those who have to select critics for broadcasting; it came home to me during the series on French Novelists which finished this week. Many good things have been said, the papers on Constant, Fromentin, and Zola, by Lord David Cecil, Mr. Sackville West, and Mr. Pritchett, being models of succinct exposition and interpretation. But by far the most striking thing in these talks has been the diction of the speakers. Naturally, the Third calls frequently on the don and the man of letters; and it is among the young of these species that the degradation of standard speech proceeds at the most alarming rate. I have heard recordings of my own hapless accents, and I hasten to include myself in this censure. The microphone reveals, what is barely noticeable in conversation, that our drawling triphthongisations reach at times a point of almost farcical horror. Tone and pitch are less important: it did not seriously disturb one that Mr. T. W. Earp and Lord David Cecil had apparently come to bury their authors, not to praise them; what did disturb was the peculiar sounds they uttered from time to time. Mr. Earp, for example, speaking of a writer whom he called Bell, referred at one point to "the personayges ovvis novills." Caught and entranced by such an allocution, I say it over and over to myself, and have lost the thread of the speaker's discourse in no time. The last speaker in the series, Mr. Pryce-Jones, liveliest and wittiest of critics, seemed to be indulging in a melodious gargle; the only redeeming feature about his English vowels was that his French ones were very considerably worse.

HENRY REED

THE MOVIES

"Monsieur Verdoux," at the New Gallery
"Tobacco Road," at the Academy

Of course we are disappointed! *Monsieur Verdoux* might be the best film in the world (which it is far from being), and still we should complain that it wasn't Charlie.

Or rather, it is and it isn't. The voice that a few years ago added an amused commentary to *The Gold Rush* has stepped forward. It was a gentle, pruned, sympathetic voice; and now *he* is a gentle, pruned ladies' man, with a little waxed moustache and brisk old-fashioned ways. He comes from a far-distant Continent and another century. He it was who, in *The Great Dictator,* unbending from leadership, mesmerised the plump matron at the ball with his eyes and a murmured, "Why so triste?" His gallantries have more than an impress of fiction, the hairdresser's touch. Irresistible conquests have been his. Hearts are trumps. He is the hero of *The Italian Straw Hat,* but no longer content with farce (what a maniac world has overtaken him!), and grown smaller, prettier, artfuller, older. If his innocence and our acquiescence get rather jolted, he can still, in his last moments, wear a *pensée,* so to speak, in his button-hole. Uneasy quixotry, muted fun, irony with a polish. But oh for the polished—the over-polished—floor!

This reformed or refined character is seen first about his garden cutting roses while in the distance a famous incinerator belches blackly. Lady-killer! Now, how does that joke, pursued to the bitter end, work out? In the circumstances, very well indeed. But daintily, humorously, grimly, lyrically, through a series of murderous-amorous episodes, to the moral that, with mankind bent on mass slaughter, a mere private venture in killing is of little account. Chaplin doesn't, in fact, believe that; if it came to the point, he would almost certainly prefer himself to be killed rather than to kill. But he must attempt the "ruthless" argument. Better, then, a white-washed Landru than power politicians and atom-bomb kings preparing the torture of half humanity. Make him a sadly sparkling little man, do him out of his job (world slump), give him a crippled wife and children, wipe out this family in an accident, let him give himself up and walk to the guillotine untroubled, and there you are. Or there, perhaps, despite the Chaplinesque bravura, you aren't.

For this idea of Chaplin's is a satirical one, and satire and tears don't mix. *Monsieur Verdoux* only incidentally, and at moments wanly amuses. The dapper, dangerously poised hero skates on thin ice that fascinates by its very thinness: a quite different sensation from what we are used to in Chaplin films. One dreads the lapse in a performance that was once all lapses. It doesn't, I may say, come. However one may take *Monsieur Verdoux*—and I have tended perhaps to take it rather hardly—there can be no question that this is by far the most skilful of all Chaplin's films. From beginning to end he has composed it beautifully, and his own performance is quite faultless. A subtle smooth finish irons out every incongruity so that, when the time comes, he can romp wildly (the boating episode and the wedding), and still not stray out of his chosen key. That key is no longer A major. Probably it is as natural for Chaplin, growing older, to refine on his art and mitigate his antics as it is for us to regret the loss of innocence, vulgarity and fun. And the vast majority of people *will* regret them: for once I am pretty sure how audiences will feel.

So far as I am concerned I have not rushed to

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see *Monsieur Verdoux* again; when I do go, I shall be quite prepared to revise my opinion.

John Ford's filming of *Tobacco Road*, which I recall reading and enjoying many years ago, revives again a much-banned slice of life that seems as preposterous and real to-day as it did then. The censor, apparently, has done some tinkering with the film (made in 1941), but what remains captures the eye. There is about these poor whites less sex and brutality than I remember and more extravagant zest. The evangelism, the lolling on doorsteps, the great car crashing fences, the night spent in the hotel, have been realised by Ford with something of the beauty and force that went to make *The Grapes of Wrath*. These poorer relations of the Joads are in their way hardly less memorable, while Charlie Grapewin's old dodger touches the heights of comedy.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

COCK CROW

The cock crew twice. I turned and tossed
Dreaming the honeysuckle was so sweet
I could imagine it in sleep.
When the cock crew, cock crew, I lost.

I feared the meaning of his trumpet
From my high-gardened sleep, and grieved
That coming of the day should heave
Away the contemplative blanket.

Here is another day to dress
In ruffled feathers; the brown egg
In clucking wonder to be laid.
Enegy is unhappiness

Which finds a hedge and shelter here,
Here in the garden where the bee
Homes to the honeysuckle tree.
But the cock crows, cock crows too near.

The world turns. Am I afraid?
I can feel conscience multiplied
By chiding voices millionfold
Cock-crowing now, "Have I betrayed?"

The cock crew twice, crew twice. I know
One more summons is permitted
By tradition of the city.
Cock crow, cock crow . . . cock crow.

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Correspondence

THE FLOATING VOTE

SIR,—The results of the Gallup Poll, appearing in the *News Chronicle* of November 5, are as significant as the municipal elections. Experience has shown that the Gallup method is extremely accurate and that the percentage vote in a General Election can be predetermined by its use to within one or two per cent. It would be as fatal to ignore the eight per cent. drop in the Labour vote and the four-and-a-half per cent. rise in the Tory vote which it shows as it would be to ignore the warning of the local elections.

But its importance will be lost if the Poll is not studied more scientifically. The *News Chronicle*, in an understandable desire not to prove statistically that Liberalism is down and out, is always careful to accompany the Gallup Survey figures with an Editorial explaining they are incapable of interpretation. " . . .It must be emphasised," they said, when they published the Gallup figures for the General Election, which were within one per cent of the actual results, "that it is impossible to base on these results any forecast as to the probable distribution of seats among the various Parties . . ." But while there might have been an excuse for not interpreting the Poll in 1945 there can be no such excuse to-day. In the "British General Election of 1945," a study produced by R. B. McCallum and Alison Readman for the Nuffield Institute, a reasoned statistical method is developed for interpreting the Gallup Survey and a number of graphs are given which enable the student of political form to determine, with considerable accuracy, what would be the result in seats of any given shift in the percentage vote of any Party. It is, therefore, unfortunate that the *News Chronicle* tries to explain away the latest Survey figures by saying: "There is nearly always a wide disparity between the votes cast and the seats won by the Parties . . . one major reason is the existence and persistence of the Liberal vote . . ."

In fact, the Gallup Poll, read in the light of the McCallum-Readman analysis, shows that the Liberal vote is to-day a factor of little practical importance. How far a Party can profit by a swing of votes in its favour depends upon the number of seats which at the previous election it almost captured. Here the Liberals are in an impossible position. Until they have achieved a swing in their favour of over twenty per cent., any lesser access of strength will only be rewarded by six seats for every three-quarter million of additional electors whom they bring into the Liberal fold. At the moment the Gallup figures put the Liberal revival at two per cent. The McCallum-Readman analysis shows this is worth about three seats.

But if a tremendous swing is necessary to produce a significant difference in the Liberal Party's Parliamentary strength, the exact opposite is the case with Labour and Tory. It is true that, as seats are distributed at present, Labour has a temporary advantage and, had the Conservative and Labour Poll been equal at the General Election, Labour would, in fact, have gained an absolute majority of 332 seats. The McCallum-Readman calculations, however, show that after redistribution it is practically certain that any Party which can secure two per cent. more of the total votes than its nearest rival will have an absolute Parliamentary majority. This will remain true, despite the variations in the Liberal vote which the Poll shows.

The present Gallup figures give the Tory Party a four-and-a-half per cent. lead over the Labour Party. It would, however, be wrong to interpret the Poll as meaning that if a General Election were announced to-morrow the Gallup figures would represent the distribution of the votes.

From July, 1943, until the break-up of the Coalition Government, the Gallup Poll showed that the Conservative Party never had the support of more than thirty per cent. of the electorate. Yet during the Caretaker Government and General Election period this support increased by ten per cent. The reason for it does not seem to be the personality of the Caretaker Government or the Conservative Election programme, but a factor which comes out quite clearly in the other figures appearing in the present Gallup Survey. There are many people who are prepared to say that they will vote against the Government, but who, when the time comes, cannot bring themselves to turn out an existing Administration. Thus, at the present time, according to the Gallup Survey, only forty per cent. of the electorate supports the Government, yet fifty-two per cent. are in favour of the Labour Government staying in office until 1950. If the same trends occur in 1950 as occurred in 1945 this twelve per cent., who are opposed to the Labour Government and yet believe that it should remain in office, will vote Labour, in the same way as some ten per cent. of the electorate, who had declared themselves against the Conservative Party all through the War, ultimately voted Tory in order to support the Government of the day.

Other indications in the Poll show that a certain percentage of those who have declared themselves against the Government, in fact support it. Thus forty-five per cent. of the electorate think that the

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Government has either been "about right" in its Socialism or else not Socialist enough, and only forty-two per cent. think it has been too Socialist. For these reasons it would be quite wrong to conclude that a Labour Government would not be returned if a General Election were to be held. On the other hand, it would be the height of folly not to study the trend revealed by the Gallup Poll.

Even with the present distribution a seven-and-a-half per cent. swing would increase Tory representation to 327 and a ten-and-a-half per cent. swing would almost double their present strength, giving them 388 seats. Unless redistribution is accompanied by the abolition of the plural and the business vote, the present temporary bias in favour of Labour will be replaced by a permanent anti-Labour bias. At the last election the business vote was probably decisive in Glasgow Central, Worcester and Holborn as well as, of course, in the City of London. With the change of opinion shown by the present Gallup Survey it might well be decisive in many other areas.

The danger signal of the Survey is not, however, so much the evidence it gives of a swing of political opinion as the proof it contains that the Government have failed to convince even their own supporters of the correctness of their policy. Thus forty per cent. of the electorate declare themselves to be Labour but only twenty-seven per cent. consider that food cuts should be made by the Government and only thirty-two per cent. considered that the cut in housing already announced was necessary.

Irrespective of election results, a production drive can only succeed if the Government policy has the backing and understanding of the people. On the Gallup showing it has not. Support does not go in the main to the Tories—the level of political intelligence is too high—it does not in the main go to the minor parties because it is realised they cannot form an alternative government. Nevertheless the public bewilderment revealed in the contradictions of the latest Gallup Survey are signs which no Government should ignore.

House of Commons. GEOFFREY BING

SIR,—We all agree that the municipal elections were fought with disregard for municipal issues. The cuts made by the Government were timed in a way which must have delighted the Conservative Party. Let us freely acknowledge the tactical flat-footedness of our leaders, but we must make clear to ourselves whether we agree that cuts are necessary or not. Is it intended that bacon and petrol, and now potatoes and sugar can be supplied in their previous quantities? It is these cuts which have brought the municipal defeat. I was bluntly told of support withdrawn or reversed on account of the bacon cut when I called voters out on November 1.

Now for your remedy, "the recovery of the old zest of the street corner." My own ward organisation canvassed more diligently than ever before. It got good results. It tried open-air meetings but none came to listen. People don't do this any more. The national press from the *Daily Express* to the *Manchester Guardian* has lined up against the Government. The local press is no less behind in the attack. For 365 days in the year the people absorb statement, implication, inflection and reporting all weighted against us.

In face of all this my own ward party increased its Labour vote from 1,800 last year by nearly a thousand to over 2,800 this, but 45 per cent. went to the poll and gave our opponents a majority of 600.

The working class voted us down because of cuts. The Opposition sabotage a united effort by stating that the cuts are unnecessary. The press, whose ownership and control is out of our hands, support the Opposition. What more can we do? Your article, though admirable in many ways and certainly stimulating, does not give the answer.

Oxford. MARCUS LOWER

YESTERDAY AND TO-MORROW

SIR,—I see from your issue of November 1 that Mr. Hugh Massingham is continuing his mission to inform England that he has discovered that Ireland is living in the past and oblivious of the rest of the world. This time his generalisations are based on a visit to the smallest room of a large museum crammed (to my mind too full!) with international objects. This particular room contains relics of the period 1916-1922.

May I instance (at the risk of being branded as an indignant cackler) (a) Ireland's attempts to enter Uno; (b) Mr. De Valera's visit and reception at the Paris Marshall Plan talks; (c) the recent Ministerial talks in London which resulted in the Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement signed on November 4; (d) Ireland's part in P.I.C.A.O. and the development of international flying; and (e) the increase of Irish diplomatic missions? These are a few of the examples which might disprove Mr. Massingham's view that we Irishmen are goldfishes living in a bowl.

We are not perfect, but we are better than Mr. Massingham thinks. KILLANIN

Spiddal House, Co. Galway.

SIR,—Mr. Massingham does write bunkum. It is astonishing to find a man writing that "Ireland is turning inwards and becoming insulated against outside influences." In reality nationalism counts for little in Eire to-day. The 1916 Room in the National Museum stirs no more emotion in an Irishman under forty than Nelson and his "collaterals" at Greenwich for an Englishman. Here are some common enough Hiberniana from Irish farm workers: "The English landlord took our coat, but the Irish landlord takes our hide," or: "There should be plenty of rich men in Ireland, because they pay no wages"; or this, with all the wisdom of Hesiod: "A man's country is where he hangs up his coat to go to work." Listen to the girls at service speaking bitterly of "that old fraud Dev." "Its all very fine for himself to be talking of Irish culture and language, but all we get out of it is to work for seven or eight shillings a week, and we have to 'go foreign' if we want a decent wage."

The fundamental fact in Irish political life to-day is the foreign policy of Ernest Bevin. This is rapidly abolishing feelings of enmity towards Britain, at least with the ruling class. However much their leaders might deny it, and one does not find them doing this, all classes in Ireland believe that soon the West is to fight the great Anti-Christ of the East, the Soviet Union. Over the last two years this important factor has entered Irish politics. In the comfortable hotel lounges from Mayo to Kerry, one may find many an English tourist on common ground with every clerical Fascist talking about "how much worse the damned Russians are than the Nazis." In scores of parish churches the same tale goes on. Randolf Churchill has long filled the *Irish Times* with a couple of columns on the lines of his father's Fulton speech. The Irish press always represents Franco Spain as a land of liberty and progress. Early in 1946 I saw Sunday newspapers in this holy Catholic Ireland carrying banner headlines, "U.S.A. ready to atom bomb Russia." Mr. Ernest Bevin may draw what comfort he likes from the fact that he is well-nigh canonized in Southern Ireland as a result of his table thumping whenever he sits down with the Russians, and takes orders from Byrnes or Marshall. There are no voices of Wolfe Tone in Ireland to-day. "Ireland becoming insulated . . ." Well, I never. She's one of the sixteen nations in the Marshall Plan for Europe and Bevin's Western bloc. That's her role for the future. M. E. BARDSLEY

27 Nelson Road, Hartshill.

SOUTH SLESVIG

SIR,—Critic's diary of his recent visit to Denmark is timely and valuable, though I fear he seriously underestimates the significance of the Slesvig question to the Danish population both north and south of the German border, to whom it is anything but "academic." And until a plebiscite is taken there

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is no means of knowing for certain how a large proportion of the population in South Slesvig, i.e., south of the frontier, desires incorporation in Denmark. The signs are unmistakable, however, and suggest an easy majority in favour of union of the territory with Denmark. The evidence from the schools is particularly abundant, e.g., the Danish schools of Flensburg, with only 400 children in 1940 had 7,000 by the summer of this year—a figure which represents not only 80 per cent. of the school population of the town but as much as 50 per cent. of the total number of school children in South Slesvig.

Critic may fairly ask how a small minority of Danes in South Slesvig at the time of the Slesvig plebiscite of 1920 can have been turned into a large Danish majority in 1947. The answer rests on the following which, I think, are undeniable:—

(i) the illegalities committed by Germany in Slesvig in 1920 when intimidation, the forging of identity documents, and similar practices, concealed the true wishes of the German-speaking population;

(ii) the long intensive process of Germanisation during the period 1864-1920 when Germany held Slesvig as a prize of her first war of aggression against humanity. In that period many a Dane was taught not only to deny but also to forget his "Danishness"; and I know of South Slesvigers who, after their liberation from Nazidom in 1945, discovered for the first time that their grandparents were Danes—not Germans as they had supposed;

(iii) the antipathy of German—equally with Danish-Slesvigers to the mass of alien East German fugitives who were allowed to pour into South Slesvig over two years ago. These East Germans represent a civilisation with which, because of its much lower standards, all Slesvigers have little or no sympathy. One of its features is its retention of the Nazi social and political outlook. Critic will have read in the press of numerous instances, unfortunately on the increase, of victimisation by the Kiel Government of old-established German-speaking Slesvigers, deprived of office because of their sympathies with the Danish element in South Slesvig and replaced by German fugitives from the East. The natives of South Slesvig—both Danish-speaking and German-speaking—believe that they have no future within Germany now that they are outnumbered and that their only hope is the expulsion of the fugitives as a result of the withdrawal of German sovereignty from all Slesvig. It must not be forgotten that the line of the River Eider, ancient frontier between Slesvig and Holstein, was also the true cultural boundary between Germany and Denmark until the recent flood of East Germans.

WALTER FITZGERALD

The University of Manchester, Manchester, 13.

MR. MIKOLAJCZYK

SIR,—It may be of interest to you to learn something of the treatment accorded by the Polish Press to an article entitled "Short View of Poland" by Mr. Kingsley Martin published in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION on August 16 last.

In that article Mr. Kingsley Martin wrote:—

"He (M. Mikolajczyk) had declared throughout the election that if the Lublin bloc won, Poland would be terrorised and all who were in opposition to the Government liquidated. When the Government did precisely the opposite and amnestied even those who were in arms against it, Mikolajczyk's last political weapon fell from his hands."

As reprinted in the Polish Governmental press M. Mikolajczyk is made to state that if the bloc won *Mikolajczyk himself* would spread terror throughout Poland. I think you will agree that that is a complete and presumably deliberate inversion of the meaning of the original passage.

It may be of further interest to you to know that M. Mikolajczyk printed the article in full in his paper, *Gazeta Ludowa,* and it was deleted by the censor *in toto.*

In view of the circumstances under which M. Mikolajczyk was compelled to leave Poland—the suppression of all legal activities of the Opposition and the imminence of measures to deprive him and his principal supporters of their Parliamentary immunity from arrest—in view also of the wave of arrests that has occurred since the article in question was written, perhaps Mr. Kingsley Martin would now be inclined to agree that his "Short View of Poland" was indeed a good deal too short.

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

[Critic discusses this letter in the London Diary.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

STOLEN WIVES

SIR,—A press account of a judge's award of £100 damages to a petitioner in a divorce suit, because the co-respondent had "stolen" his wife, leads one to wonder why the feminists, in their unremitting zeal for women's rights, seem to have overlooked the archaic property concept of a wife, which is still enshrined in the law.

Despite reforms which have tended to bring the law abreast of contemporary conditions, and to confirm women's status as the social, political, and economic equals of men, we still find divorce judges assessing and awarding damages to husbands for the loss of their wives, on the outmoded assumption, that a wife is just another of her husband's chattels, like his house and his car, or that she is a housekeeper and nursemaid, for the loss of whose "services" he must be compensated.

Surely, every woman who reads an account of one of these cases to-day, must be affronted at the spectacle of learned judges, awarding £100 for the loss of one wife and £500 for the loss of another, basing their varying valuations on the co-respondent's degree of affluence, the degree of "enticement" which he used to "steal" the wife, and finally how much the wife, or rather her "services" were worth to the husband in terms of money.

Even in the days when the property concept of a wife was an integral part of *mores,* as well as of the law, every happy husband, if he thought about it at all, must have realised that all that his wife gave him—the totality of what his marriage meant in his life—could never be expressed in material terms, let alone assessed as to its value in pounds, shillings and pence. How much more absurd and offensive are these calculations to-day, when a wife has a status, not as a chattel nor as a servant, but as a person with rights, equal to those of her spouse.

Less important, but equally absurd, is the use of the term "stolen" to describe an adulterous wife, again implying that she is an inanimate piece of property, with no feelings and no will of her own. There is no doubt that the guilt of co-respondents varies, in the sense that some use (or are constrained to use) more "enticements" than others to lure a wife from the path of marital fidelity. In other words, the guilt, of the co-respondent, is in inverse ratio to the guilt, i.e., the initial willingness, of the wife. But the implication that when the free-born, self-willed woman of to-day, strays from the path of virtue, she has been "enticed" and "stolen" is patently ludicrous.

Is it not about time that in this, as in other respects, the law should be brought abreast of the times?

EUSTACE CHESSER

55 Upper Brook Street, W.1.

RAVEL

SIR,—I always read the Gramophone Notes of Mr. Edward Sackville West with great interest. Referring to these notes of your last issue, Mr. Sackville West suggested that Monsieur Munch had tampered with the Ravel Score of the "Bolero." I must inform you that Mr. Sackville West was suffering from a severe aural illusion when he "unmistakably" heard a Theatre Organ for the Horn and Celesta. It is very necessary that your readers should be made aware of this fact, in the interest of Monsier Munch's reputation as an artist and on whose behalf I have full authority to speak.

VICTOR OLOF

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METHUEN

BOOKS IN GENERAL

For some thirty years around the turn of the century FitzGerald's translation of Omar Khayyam was the most popular poem in English. It expressed very glamorously the philosophy most acceptable to the irreligious, a compound of hedonism and fatalism. This triumph of the *Rubaiyat*, coming more than thirty years after their first publication, marked a signal change in the *Zeitgeist*, and FitzGerald—much as he would hate it—must be given a place beside two other Anglo-Irish writers, Wilde and Shaw, as a mighty destroyer of Victorian values.

As European civilisation disintegrated, the poem lost much of its potency (so, for the same reasons, did the work of Anatole France). Epicureanism—in the modern sense—is a teaching that presupposes the availability of a private life. When one was deafened by bombing, one did not like being invited to enjoy "the brave Music of a *distant* Drum"; and FitzGerald's italicising of the word "distant" emphasised its irrelevance. It would be agreeable to believe that the world had now again become a place fit for epicureans to live in. FitzGerald's translation, in any case, retains its rank as one of the most beautiful of English poems; and perhaps it is easier to-day for the fastidious to appreciate it than when it appeared every month in a new edition, often laden with detestable illustrations or bound in mauve velvet with yapp edges.

Even if FitzGerald had never produced this masterpiece, he would be one of my favourite writers, an epistolary no less enjoyable than Horace Walpole, Cowper, Lady Bessborough or Byron. His letters are exemplary in the ease of their style, comparable in refinement and melodiousness with the prose of Newman. They also reveal a peculiarly endearing character. It is therefore with eagerness that one begins to read a new American book entitled *The Life of FitzGerald* by Alfred McKinley Terhune (Oxford University Press, 21s.). Such writers as Trilling, Livingston, Lowes and N. I. White have led us to expect much from American scholarship.

The first thing one wants to know about a new biography is whether it contains any new material, and this test Mr. Terhune passes with flying colours. He is the first, it appears, to have obtained unlimited access to the FitzGerald material at Trinity, Cambridge, and has examined over a thousand unpublished FitzGerald letters (some of them to Thackeray). No great surprises have resulted; and such are always possible, though we seem to know FitzGerald intimately from his letters, a mild, modest, quirky, meditative fellow, an eternal student who was never young. Though deeply eccentric —"We FitzGeralds are all mad, but with this difference that I know that I am"—he never strayed beyond the limits that Victorian tolerance could admit. To-day he would be condemned as a drone, since the notion of earning his living seems never to have occurred to him.

Some letters to Thackeray, now first printed, show his early anxiety about religion. After expressing characteristic delight in the words and tune of a marching song, he asks: "On Christianity are you true, and, if you are, must we give up liking the British Grenadiers?" His friend Allen's diary for 1831 contains an amusingly Victorian entry: "Walked with FitzGerald . . . a very pleasant conversation about the miserable depravity of humanity. . . ." Soon, and without any such distress as was to burden Clough, he settled into a comfortable, unaggressive scepticism. The Tractarians, however, succeeded in stirring him to anger; and what I find most unexpected in this new material is that he troubled to draft, if not to despatch, a letter begging Lord John Russell to make alterations in the Book of Common Prayer. Puseyism he detested because it entailed alteration of the usages in church to which from childhood he had been familiar.

Now two new outbursts from him, aged twenty-two;

> Pure good feelings are so entrancing while they last: but that is the reason they last so short a time: but our more paltry propensities are cold and rational, and so stay with us, and become part of our natures. When I came from Leicester the other day on the Coach, I am sure I felt like an Angel: it was a fine morning, the country richly tilled and full of promise, and here and there spires of churches, and little villages, over the face of the country. I felt tears in my eyes often, I could not tell why. Now I was not ashamed of feeling this: but I am ashamed to tell you of it: it looks like foolish romance but it is not: however, it requires an indulgent friend to confide it to.

And again:

> I am angry with Hume for admiring the French so: and standing up so for polite manners to the ladies—a practice which turns Nature topsy turvy. I have got the name of being rather a brute in society—can't help it; I am worth more. I believe, that any young lady that ever was made, so I am more inclined to tell them to open the door for me, than for me to get up and do it for them. This is a most horrid sentence, on second thoughts—for millions of girls have existed a million times more virtuous than I am; and I am ashamed of having said it. I ought to scratch out the sentence—but why should you not see that I can say a silly thing?

Four years later he is discussing with Thackeray the possibility of marriage with "a plain sensible girl without a farthing." Mr. Terhune declares convincingly that this was a Miss Charlesworth who soon afterwards married Cowell, the Orientalist who was to introduce FitzGerald to Omar Khayyam. From some MS. notes by Mrs. Cowell we get a precious picture of the poet "sitting for hours gazing at a solitary flower in a glass of water, watching it unfold, not from any botanical interest but from sheer appreciation of its beauty."

Aged forty-seven, already the crustiest of bachelors, FitzGerald with quixotic folly married the daughter of an old friend, a woman of his own age, to whom he was attracted neither physically nor intellectually. His well-founded consternation before the event is now revealed: "A very doubtful experiment . . . I shut my eyes to the consequences . . . George, I am going to be married, don't congratulate me." The marriage at once proved intolerable, and FitzGerald, usually so abstemious, was at this period seen the worse for wine, we learn, first by Frederick Pollock and later by Borrow. Soon after this recourse to "the Grape" he began translating Omar Khayyam, having parted from his wife. The collapse of his marriage may be thought to have brought fully home to him his profound and congenital epicureanism, for the *Rubaiyat* are singularised from his other verse by their poetic intensity. In them he unlocked his heart, I think, discovering the sensuousness he was careful to exclude from his conduct.

In the autumn of 1859 FitzGerald took refuge at Lowestoft. The publication of the *Rubaiyat* early in the year had coincided with the death of Kenworthy Browne, the friend who for twenty-six years had enjoyed the first place in his heart. As a boy of sixteen Browne had dawned on FitzGerald as an ideal made palpable, "quick to love and quick to fight—full of confidence, generosity and the glorious spirit of Youth." (Happily married, an exemplary country squire, Browne duly fulfilled his friend's expectations, and figures as Phidippus in *Euphranor*.) While the total indifference to the *Rubaiyat* of reviewers and the public did not disturb the modest poet, the loss of Browne left a large place pathetically vacant in his heart. This was the most despondent hour in a tranquil life. Loneliness would drive him at night to the Lowestoft water-front, seeking vainly for companionship. Suddenly he was able to write rapturously to his friend's widow that he had discovered what seems to him a reincarnation of the youthful Browne—a fisherman called Fletcher, familiarly known as "Posh." This encounter led to an incident considerably more bizarre than Mr. Terhune suggests. FitzGerald, a recluse aged fifty-five and not unmuffish, joined Posh as partner in the ownership of a herring-fishing boat. The venture fizzled out, for Posh did not care for accounts and did care for drink. Mr. Terhune has found—or at any rate printed—nothing new on the matter except a description of Posh in one of FitzGerald's letters to Cowell: "A grand fellow," he calls him, "like one of those first British sent over to Rome."

Enough has been quoted, I hope, to show that this new material is of interest to every student of the Victorian literature. But for what else can the book be praised? Though FitzGerald's limpid letters proffer a wealth of detail from which to compose a portrait no less lively than Lord David Cecil's Cowper, Mr. Terhune has managed wonderfully to make this extraordinary character seem dull. Can it be that, like some Germans of the old school, he thinks that to engage the reader's interest is below the dignity of a scholar? He seems deliberately to avoid such details as are significant. Thus FitzGerald, in old age when his sight weakened, used village boys to read to him. Mr. Terhune dutifully records this habit, but omits the fact most charmingly characteristic of the old poet: having read *Great Expectations* to himself, he had it read aloud to him to see what the boy would make of it—"and he was so interested that he re-interested me, too." Here is a more alarming instance. Mr. Terhune writes:

> In May, 1879, his eldest brother John died at Boulge after a lingering and painful illness. "We were very good friends," FitzGerald remarked, "of very different ways of thinking."

At this point, substituting a full stop for a semicolon, the biographer cuts short his quotation. The sentence ought to continue: "I had not been within his lawn gates (three miles off) these dozen years (no fault of his), and I did not enter them at his Funeral—which you may very likely—and properly—think wrong." That a biographer should omit so odd a fact might seem unaccountable, but the suspicion is forced upon me that Mr. Terhune disapproves of a great deal in FitzGerald; and that he has been no less cavalier with his unpublished material than with what we already knew. His purpose seems to be to make the poet look as respectable as possible, to portray this delicious eccentric as a Mr. Everyman who has been misunderstood. We are never told that the last time FitzGerald saw his wife, he cut her. We are told that he was far less indolent than has been supposed; and no room is found for the confession: "I am an idle fellow, of a very lady-like turn of sentiment: and my friendships are more like loves, I think." He turns out to have been not only hard-working but religious, in a nice undogmatic way, of course.

> The limits of his heterodoxy were skepticism towards the theology of the Old Testament, and uncertainty of life after death. He never expressed any doubt of the existence of a Supreme Being; he revered and admired Christ; and throughout his life he respected, supported and defended the Established Church.

Mr. Terhune is evidently a master of anti-climax. He might be writing the obituary of a Rotarian. I must, however, regretfully suggest that the theology of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, excited FitzGerald's scepticism, and not only in the matter of immortality. He proclaimed his disbelief in miracles; there is no reason to suppose that he believed in the divinity of Christ; and a phrase has slipped into this book that makes it more doubtful than ever whether he was even a deist: "I never dare God Bless people scarcely—for the word has little meaning in my mouth. He is now blessing L. Buonaparte."

Industry is a virtue beautiful in a biographer, but it needs to be directed by insight and candour. If Mr. Terhune were talking about the unknown author of *Beowulf*, he could hardly show less understanding of his subject's character. One wonders why on earth he picked FitzGerald rather than Flecknoe or Flatman or Flodoard—unless it be that, hearing of all this unmined ore in Trinity Library, he rushed, in a brave pioneering spirit, to stake a claim. Poor FitzGerald! Already Thomas Wright's Life of him could claim to be the worst book of its sort in the language. And now this painstaking production is likely to stand for years in the way of any adequate biography. RAYMOND MORTIMER

CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy. By FUNG YU-LAN. Translated by E. R. Hughes. *Kegan Paul.* 15*s.*

In the complex reaction which the expression of the Chinese genius, in thought, in literature or in art, evokes, I can detect three strands: first, delight—here is something rare and lovely; secondly, curiosity—here is something really different; I must try to know more of it; thirdly, exasperation—the loveliness and the difference are elusive; try to grasp them and they elude your clutch; try to pursue them and they vanish altogether or, worse, dwindle into the commonplace, so that you are left with an impression of something curiously different and lovely which evaporates like the fragrance of a flower, if you try to continue to smell it. This impression of something different, rare and first-rate is extremely intriguing, and compared with Indian philosophy, whose extravagant pretentiousness evokes little desire for further acquaintance, makes one anxious to learn more.

Those who share any part of these feelings will do well to read *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy,* which throws into high relief the qualities at which I have glanced, the rareness and the difference, while at the same time evoking the same sensations of pleasure in the first-rate and of exasperation because its essence eludes you. The book is one of four in which Fung Yu-Lan has during the last two decades developed his own philosophy. His treatment here is, however, historical since in this book he seeks to present his philosophy as a continuation and development of the main philosophical tradition of China. The book, therefore, is primarily concerned to present a sketch of that tradition. The sketch is preceded by a summary of Fung Yu-Lan's general philosophy, as expounded in his other books and, more particularly, in his ethical work published in 1943. (The present work, by the way, is published simultaneously in England and China.)

The essence of Fung Lu-Yan's philosophy lies in a distinction between the natural and the artificial in the sense of the created life. The natural life falls into two parts; there is the life of unreasoning instinct and desire, man aware only of himself, and there is also the life of egoistic utilitarianism, man aware of other men and seeking to profit himself at their expense. The created life also falls into two parts; man aware of society, that is to say, of the greater human whole of which he is a part and sensible of obligation towards it, the ethical life; and man aware of the universe, the Great Whole, and seeking to transcend the human in a life of identification with the whole, which is beyond joy and sorrow. The function of philosophy is to raise man from the first pair of these four lives to the second. This scheme is presented as a development of the traditional philosophy of China and, more particularly, of the thought of the Ju philosophers, Confucius and Mencius. There are two points about this philosophy which seem worth emphasising. First, to the modern reader it is extremely exasperating; constantly you think yourself on the brink of revelation only to find yourself bogged in a mess of words. Take this, for example, a typical utterance from the *Lao Tze Book*:

> Taking the entity of the Tao within, it is a fine essence, and this essence is very true, and within this truth is reality.

At other times one's mind is bogged in the kind of statement that makes metaphysics a stumbling block to so many moderns, as, for example, "they built their system on the principle of the permanence of non-being and being, and centred it upon the idea of super-oneness." Reading such passages the doubt assails one whether this philosophy is, like so much Indian philosophy, no more than a combination of pretentious phrases. For my part, I found the doubt resolved by a reflection on the second point I would like to bring out, the constant parallelism between the thought of the Chinese and the great Greek philosophers, a parallelism which the continuous intrusion of the most intriguing differences ever prevents from being complete. Here are four points of similar doctrine.

First, among the analogies with Plato, there is the notion that the higher life is *both* the worldly and the other-worldly; is, in fact, that of the philosopher-statesman. The Chinese sage concerns himself the more effectively with politics and with business, precisely because of his other-worldly vision—I would like to have said "other-worldly" contacts, but its business associations have ruined the phrase. "Inner sageness and outer kingliness" is the Chinese version of Plato's philosopher-kings.

Secondly, just as in Plato it is through dialectic, so in Chinese philosophy it is through knowledge of the Tao that the transition to the vision of the other world is achieved. Hence, we are told "for men in this world hearing the Tao is the most important thing of all." There is, however, the interesting addition, Chinese, but not, I think, Greek, that though you can command respect when young and strong without a knowledge of the Tao, if after middle-age you are without it, then what claim have you for respect?

Thirdly, the language in which the apprehension of the Tao is described is that of a mystical vision. Once the Tao is understood, "the supreme morale bursts into existence entirely naturally"; in other words, you don't have to try to do and be good, you do it and are it naturally; but as in Plato, the vision is only achieved as the result of a long preparatory process of "accumulated acts of righteousness."

The flavour of Aristotle is scarcely less pronounced. There is an insistence on what is called "ritual," as one of the four primary virtues; ritual turns out to be the observance of the standard of conduct which the righteous man prescribes. What is that? "The right and proper . . . the delineation of the mean according to the circumstances." The apparent circularity is no less Aristotelian than the insistence on the mean. Also Aristotelian is the distinction between the man who has wisdom, the fourth of the virtues, and the possessor of the other three only; the wise man does righteous acts because, in the light of his other-worldly vision, he knows that they are righteous and ought to be done. Others act righteously when they do so because they have been taught; in other words, they blindly toe the line of good conduct because of their conditioning.

C. E. M. JOAD

PORTRAIT OF EDITH WHARTON

Portrait of Edith Wharton. By PERCY LUBBOCK. *Jonathan Cape.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

"Beautifully done," we murmur as we turn Mr. Lubbock's elaborate pages, "charmingly written, and yet. . . ." Perhaps his own habits of qualification are infectious, for what he gives with one hand, he almost invariably takes back with the other; or perhaps we are too much prejudiced in favour of the sitter to be able to see this portrait with proper detachment. The fact remains that if we ask the question "what impression would this book make on anyone who had not known Edith Wharton personally?" the answer seems to be: an unsympathetic character, efficient, domineering, *mondaine*, restless and stuck-up (if that be the right translation of *collet monté*) to the last degree. Of course, that was not Mr. Lubbock's intention; and in the last two chapters he includes references to Mrs. Wharton's charities and to her happy relations with younger people which are meant to set the balance right. But they don't. The earlier character, supported by a multiplicity of examples, is so clearly depicted, that later modifications have the effect of those additions to Holy Writ which scholars reject as the work of a pious continuator. Not that anything in the earlier chapters is untrue. Undoubtedly Edith Wharton was efficient, could be stuck-up, had an exaggerated respect for official values, and fidgeted about with ash trays and little tables in an exasperating manner. But somehow these things shouldn't have been made so prominent. The wholly delightful opening scene describing her visits to Henry James was enough to convey that side of her character.

When it comes to writing about our friends we are all planchettes. Every time Mr. Lubbock mentions Henry James we feel that loving admiration which irradiates, with a similar warmth, the crystalline prose of M. Valery whenever he mentions Mallarmé. In this book there is a similar rise in temperature when we come to the long quotation from Charles du Bos. Mr. Lubbock has tried very hard to write fairly and affectionately about Edith Wharton, but as luck would have it, the slights and irritations have remained vivid in his mind, whereas the generosities have had to be remembered with a conscious effort.

This portrait, I suppose, is intended for posterity, not for Edith Wharton's friends; and it may be objected that Mr. Lubbock was bound to attempt a balanced likeness, irrespective of whether it was sympathetic or not. But without some kind of warmth, either of love or hate, biography ceases to be alive; and life alone gives unity to the discrepancies of which every character is composed. It is really impossible to believe that the polished American duchess of Mr. Lubbock's biography could have written *Summer*: and she didn't. It was written by a human being altogether warmer and richer. This leaves us with the difficulty of explaining why many people who knew her slightly, and a few, even, who saw her frequently, thought of Edith Wharton as cold, hard and grand. "Shyness" is a word which occurs frequently in Mr. Lubbock's pages (and God knows we are glad to find a shy American, in return for all the shy Englishmen whom we have so disastrously sent to America); but it is not precisely the right word; nor is its near relation "pride." Rather it is true to say that Edith Wharton, for reasons which a psychologist could easily explain, made an exaggerated distinction between those who were "of the family" and the rest of the world outside. Within the family she laughed, told scandalous stories, read poetry and talked about the art of writing. She felt safe. Outside she put on all the formidable armour which Mr. Lubbock repeatedly describes. She had been brought up in the society of old New York, beleaguered by the vulgar, irrepressible forces of new millionairdom; she had worn that suit of armour all her life, and it fitted her like a glove. No wonder that those who knew her slightly could not imagine her without it. How one penetrated these defences and became of the family is a question I cannot answer: at any rate, like the Garter, there was no damn merit about it, nor snobbishness neither. The idea that it consisted solely of a few polite intellectuals is quite false. Suddenly she felt safe with you, and there you were, on the other side of the wall. A few hours before, and the slightest inflection would produce a glassy stare of disapproval; once inside, extraordinary tolerance took its place. If this book gives the impression that staying with Mrs. Wharton was an ordeal, I can only record that at least one of her guests kicked over the little tables, showed signs of active impatience on going round the garden, preferred to eat his meals indoors and even (I blush to remember) complained about the wine: and did not, apparently, fall from grace.

Mr. Lubbock has tried to see her both from the inside and the outside at once. Far from giving what is called a rounded portrait, the result is a trifle insubstantial. He has been too conscientious in recording feelings, and too fastidiously shy of facts. We are not even told when Edith Wharton was born; and posterity, which has grosser appetites than some distinguished writers suppose, will be hungry for information which is withheld, not only facts about her marriage, but about her intellectual interests and her friends. Facts and dates, of course, would not be easily assimilated into Mr. Lubbock's style. They would break the Jamesian web of allusion, hesitation and periphrasis. This is a beautiful example of what Mr. Connolly has called Mandarin English, rather a sleepy Mandarin, perhaps, but a sensitive one, and worth a hundred coolies. There is no page without some touch of wit or insight which makes us pause in envious admiration. And the skill with which Mr. Lubbock has woven the contributions of Edith Wharton's friends into the seamless garment of his own prose is an example to those brought up in a less severe school of craftsmanship. KENNETH CLARK

THROUGH AN EMBASSY WINDSCREEN

Classical Landscape with Figures. By OSBERT LANCASTER. *John Murray.* 15s.

This is a largish, handsomely produced book about Greece. Its author, as our perhaps most witty caricaturist, will need introduction to few, and he has illustrated it himself. Among a host of pen-drawings, there are charming pages in colour which, despite a poster-like economy of means, catch the glare and detail with felicity. In a modest, yet decisive, preface he states his aim, which was "not a ramble, nor a travel book, nor yet a guide, but a *description* in the 18th century meaning of the term." He confesses, boldly, to Byzantine preoccupations, to virtual ignorance of the language, and to "contacts"—he was an Embassy official during our successful leadership of the war against the Greek Left—"almost entirely confined to Athenian politicians and officials." Good-humouredly, he admits to having judged the Greeks thus:

> . . . my criteria, political, architectural and scenic, remain firmly Anglo-Saxon, and the standards of judgment are always those of an Anglican graduate of Oxford with a taste for architecture, turned cartoonist, approaching middle-age and living in Kensington . . . No analysis of deep underlying causes has been attempted . . . I have a very shrewd suspicion that in Greece there are no deep underlying causes . . .

Disregarding the slight rustle made by twenty-seven centuries revolving in their graves, prospective readers will, at this point, be able to guess at the kind of volume they may expect. An unusually entertaining, tasteful and intelligent one, with all the heavier stones left unturned. (Many people will add, "thank goodness.") It remains, nevertheless, the task of reviewers to turn as many stones as they have room for, and it seems that sections of this author's public may be in for something of a shock. These, as best I may, I propose to warn.

First, are you a Greek? If so, Mr. Lancaster is genuinely fond of and amused by you. He happens, however, to be entirely innocent of *humanitas,* in the Ciceronian sense, and consequently it would be wisest if you never even opened what must be the most exquisitely patronising book ever compiled about your country. A book in which every drawing of you, young or old, in or out of your national dress, makes you look exactly like an assistant head-waiter with bandy legs. (The author's written assurance that you are praiseworthily "unsentimental," "formidably intelligent," and that your "faces, figures and deportment are . . . individual and readily distinguishable" may palliate, but can it condone?) A book in which your political beliefs are treated as being only one degree less droll—"party loyalty is purely a matter of temporary convenience"—than the fact that you can occasionally be observed dying for them. Note the music-hall touch at the end:

> . . . the first Greek figure on whom I set eyes was a bearded warrior rolling in agony in the foreground . . . of an empty Kolonaki street . . . slugged through the stomach by a political opponent concealed behind some shuttered second-empire façade away in the wings.

Are you a German? You will know what to expect. French? You are impolite. Italian? You are a "miserable little Wop," belonging to "a really very humourless race." Do you mind about spelling? If Psistrati's easy, who's Patnir? Are you fussy about geography? You will be surprised to learn that from Cape Colonna to Marathon the Attic coast faces north-west, that Missolonghi is at the south-western extremity of Greece, and that you proceed west from Nauplia to reach Epidaurus. Have you sympathy for the Greek Left? E.L.A.S., E.A.M. and the Liberals are all one, and all murderers or bores, with the exception of a General Bakirdtzis (who, luckily, had a Mr. Rapp, a British Consul, to supervise him), and a village called Agrinion, which

> . . . established a reputation for responsibility and moderation. Needless to say, this avails them nothing now, and all power is concentrated in the hands of reliably reactionary officials brought in from outside.

Are you one of the "international planners, liberal intellectuals, and *New Statesman* readers generally?" You will be mortified to hear that you rejoiced, in 1922, at an incident which was—

> to saddle the (Greek) state with a burden of unemployment, to create what had never existed before, an urban proletariat, and to ring round the principle cities with a girdle of slums . . .

In other words, you, and the rest of the civilised world, acclaimed the escape of a million and a quarter Greek refugees to Greece after the most appalling pre-Hitlerian massacre of the 20th century, the sack of Smyrna by the Turks.

You say that you don't care so much about politics, in this case, and you'd rather know how Mr. Lancaster deals with the antiquities? Epidaurus, for instance? This is the opening of a paragraph of nearly twenty-nine lines:

> . . . Epidaurus, where in classical times the great shrine of Aesculapius combined for the Hellenic world the dramatic attractions of the Salzburg Festival with the therapeutic advantages of Aix or Harrogate. To-day there remain the finest Greek theatre in existence, as perfect, as functional and as unromantic as a well-designed gasometer, the foundations of several smart temples and luxury hotels . . .

Did you say stop? Voguey? If there are only five more lines about Epidaurus, what's the rest of the paragraph about? Well, partly about a rather unexciting medieval legend, and partly about three small Byzantine churches—you were warned—the largest of which was too dark for intensive study. You'd like to know what he says about the Acropolis, then, for God's sake? He's very good about the Propylaea. He says it "remains the most impressive entrance with which any man-made structure has even been provided." And he's extremely stimulating about Bassae, Kifissia, Ali Pasha of Jannina, Karytaina, the Frankish princes, the *art nouveau* quality of late Minoan, and the nastiness of the ancient Spartans. What does he think of Sparta?

> Fortunately, by way of compensation for the more than usually disappointing aspect of the modern town, one is here quite free from that sense of guilt which the presence in the neighbourhood of antique remains that one has no intention of visiting usually induces.

Sir James Frazer says it's charming? And that of all Greek cities, Sparta enjoys the most beautiful situation? Possibly. Mr. Lancaster calls the *ancient* Spartans "a race of warped and sadistic scoutmasters." Is that better? Good. Has Mr. Lancaster a style? Yes, very early Robert Byron, but with non-stop sentences. Does he display moments of imaginative insight? Can he evoke beauty? Almost. At Daphni, at Mycenae, and once when he came upon a row of empty chairs outside a cliff-café above the bay of Salamis, with an old gramophone playing a Turkish air into a lemon sunset.

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ROUTLEDGE

You want to get back to Athens, you say? The Theseion? He explains that it was built within a few years of the Parthenon, and that it is the best-preserved Greek temple of its date anywhere, but he spells it "Theseon," and calls it "supremely uninteresting." Compared to the Parthenon, "devastatingly boring." To tell you the truth, I think there's something in what he—what? You say that surely he can't find much wrong with the temple of Nike Apteros, anyway? The most flawless of small Ionic buildings? Or with the Erechtheion, and its six caryatides, the finest in the world? You insist that these almost faceless female statues are like six Demeters, timeless in majesty? Well, here is Mr. Lancaster on the temple of Nike. And then let's finish this off in straight dialogue:

> Supremely elegant and in perfect taste . . . nevertheless . . . a faint air of Buzzards.

"Buszards?"

"Buzzards. With a capital. And don't shout at me. Listen to the Erechtheion.

> . . . these elegant flower-maidens simper as unconcernedly as if they had never been called upon to balance two and a half tons of Pentelic marble on their pretty little heads."

"*Simper? Pretty* little *heads?*"

"Simper. Pretty little heads."

BRIAN HOWARD

NEW NOVELS

The Dark Daughters. By RHYS DAVIES. *Heinemann. 9s. 6d.*

A Second Griselda. By CLARA MALRAUX. *Wingate. 8s. 6d*

Romelle. By W. R. BURNETT. *Heinemann. 8s. 6d.*

Do I Wake or Sleep? By ISABEL BOLTON. *Chapman & Hall. 7s. 6d.*

The first three books on this week's list are respectively Welsh, French and American, but all three have in common that they tell the story (from the point of view of Society) of an amoral man. There is the Welsh religious hypocrite of *Dark Daughters,* who makes his fortune from brothels. There is the cultivated French opium trafficker. There is the American gangster.

How Celtic is the Welsh book, with its dark diabolism and its eerie, maniacal household locked away in deep snow. In fascination by horror, that enjoyable emotion, this work does remarkably well. And there is an original flavour in the form of a kind of crazy brusqueness that we much appreciate. The story of *The Dark Daughters* is terrific. Mansell Roberts was the son of a farmer, a man who, after financial catastrophe, "remained isolated in Biblical studies" for the rest of his days. His son, reacting from his early home life, developed an overriding ambition to make money. Also a weakness for buxom music-hall artists with golden hair. People were nothing more to him than pawns to be used ruthlessly in his game. But the bitterest treatment he reserved for his wife (a provincial dowd whom he had married for her money) and for their three little girls. He started a chemist's shop in Camden Town, then took for his mistress the uninhibited May, variety actress, with her loud cataclysmic laughter, her soiled swansdown, and her habit of eating tinned pineapple chunks in her fingers whilst she "waddled her lips in the syrup juice" like a cat or dog. Through May's questionable associates, Mansell became involved in the ownership of some brothels, and these brothels soon made him into a rich man.

Well, the long and the short of it was that he killed both wife and mistress with his Turk-like tyranny and all his miserly tricks. They both died of broken hearts. And *then* . . . he was left alone with his three daughters. . .

All three of them, spinsters of vitriolic temper, and all deeply corroded by the years of hatred and oppression at home, rose up like adders from the grass, rounded upon their father and took over command. From then onwards Mansell is hounded by his daughters to his grave. He locks himself in the turret to avoid ever seeing them, and emerges only at dead of night, with lamp held aloft, to descend into the cellars and visit his grim "secret"—the magnificent coffin he keeps down there in readiness. What a film all this would make! Especially after the snow has descended upon the ill-omened house, which it does halfway through the book. The macabre quality of the snowy landscape is magnificently described, as it shines under the moon in "spectral caverns static in a strange blue-white lustre." And within doors the daughters are all in terrific form. This is—not a study in hatred, for it is not a realistic book—but a revel in hatred, of the kind where the protagonists run mad in silver brocade, and where sometimes "the flesh of their faces seems burned away and their heads are living skulls." Laura (a fourth daughter who has escaped to the stage) brings her suitor down for a visit, and we soon find him retiring to the bathroom to take cocaine—and who shall blame him? A rich tale this, told with a thunderous gusto and a flourish unimaginable.

How French, in contrast, is Clara Malraux's intellectual eye surgeon, Roger Perrouin, who puts in such good work making love and smoking and selling opium without any fuss whatever—until he is put into gaol, and even then he remains perfectly philosophical. It is told in the form of a diary. The writer is a young girl, the mistress of Perrouin, living with her respectable family in French Indo-China. It is a readable, tolerably sophisticated book, filled with enjoyable highbrow discussions about art, life and love between the various copulations, and between the to-ing and fro-ing of the police and lawyers. The heroine is a brainy, sexy, egocentric child and understands nothing about people, until the sudden rude awakening when she discovers, from reading a newspaper one day, what manner of man her lover is. After this she rapidly grows up. The charm of the book was a little marred for me by the narrator's wise voice and her Thought Beautiful, but admittedly it all helped build up the girl's character. And she was, one must admit, a girl of stupendous strength of mind, loyalty, and S.A., and a blue-stocking into the bargain. A trial to have a girl like her in the family all the same though.

Romelle is a gangster adventure story, which I heartily enjoyed. It is vivid, dry and exciting, and without any hint of pretentiousness or artiness to be found anywhere to mar its pure and classical page.

In *Do I Wake or Sleep?* we have a book of a totally different kind again. This very clever American writer, Miss Isabel Bolton, has described New York (the New York of chic restaurants and literary cocktail parties) much in the tradition of Virginia Woolf, and with more than a hint of Henry James. Edmund Wilson has highly praised this novel, as one sees from the quote on the jacket.

The whole thing takes place in twenty-four hours, in 1939, through the stream of consciousness of the narrator, Millicent. There are only three characters, Millicent, Bridget and Percy—although there are some background figures at the cocktail party and elsewhere. Percy loves Bridget, whilst Millicent contemplates marrying Percy herself. As they sit devouring crêpes Suzettes, lobster Thermidor and Persian Melon, washing it all down with Vouvray—or else gulping "Quickies," Dry Martinis and Old Fashioneds at the cocktail party, the drama of Bridget's highly coloured life is subtly laid bare, and also the

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rama of Percy's impossible love for her. Now ere really *is* a sophisticated writer. For my own urely personal taste I find that it approaches omewhat toward that kind of literature which one ight dub Intellectual Millinery—so *voulu* is the legance, and so indomitably feminine and fugiive it all is. The main thing, however, is that he book has that rare thing, the æsthetic pproach. Miss Bolton is an artist, even if a omewhat affected one. JULIA STRACHEY

THE COLLECTIVE LIFE

dventure in the Sun. By MAURICE PEARLMAN. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The dream of an ideal community of men and omen, living together in harmony, sharing their ork and goods, and acting on the egalitarian rmula, "From each according to his ability, o each according to his needs," has haunted the inds of social reformers for centuries. Here nd there men have endeavoured to turn the ream into practical reality. The Anabaptists, he Diggers, Father Rapp and Robert Owen, ew Icarus and Brook Farm—the list is long, nd the record of failure from internal or external auses is formidable enough to have caused most ocialists to abandon the idea of community ettlements as impractical and visionary.

Yet the idea is perennial; decade after decade, n one country or another, bands of enthusiasts ather to live out their communal ideals. The rgest and most successful community experiment n socialist history is at present being conducted in he collective settlements of Palestine, and r. Maurice Pearlman, in his *Adventure in the un*, gives a really absorbing description of the fe and record of these settlements.

Their achievements are certainly impressive, nd much more extensive than most people utside Palestine imagine. The Jewish collective nd co-operative settlements are responsible r more than a quarter of the agricultural production of Palestine. They have turned many of s deserts into fertile farms by means of irrigation, nd have contributed greatly to agricultural search and development. They have shared eir knowledge and facilities with their Arab eighbours, thus raising the level of Arab farming nd providing a basis for Jewish-Arab friendship hich is in sharp contrast with the bitter conflict at arises elsewhere in Palestine. They have rovided homes and a new life for many Jewish fugees, and have offered a practical contradiction to the ever-recurring myth that the Jew is incapable of "honest manual work." Lastly, they have actually succeeded in forming an internal organisation which contains no privileged class or individuals, and which really applies "to each according to his needs" in a practical manner. To the sceptical these claims may seem far-fetched, but Mr. Pearlman justifies them very convincingly, and his findings have been confirmed by many other eye-witnesses who visited the communities during the war.

One interesting question that arises is why these communities have succeeded where so many others have failed in the past. A study of past attempts shows that communities have usually failed for two main reasons—lack of initial finance, which results in poor equipment and unnecessary hardships, and the absence of some objective outside that of merely living together in harmony. The Jewish communities have avoided both of these pitfalls; they always started with adequate funds for their initial needs, and they had as an objective the practical aim of providing a basis on which Jews could live an integrated social life instead of that existence divorced from manual work which has marked them off during their centuries of segregation in Western Europe and America.

For those interested in the problems of communal organisation this is an important record of practical experiment. For the general reader it provides a useful antidote to the hostility aroused by newspaper propaganda which has too often tried to identify all Palestine Jews with the terrorist gangs and their unconstructive policy.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

A LONG WALK WITH JEANS

The Growth of Physical Science. By SIR JAMES JEANS, O.M. *Cambridge.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

This is the last book written by the late Sir James Jeans, and to those whose imaginations have been quickened by his previous writings to look into the atom and out to the immensities of the universe without vertigo it may seem at first glance a curiously uninspiring affair. In a prefatory reference to other scientific histories he says:

> I have felt no ambition (nor competence) to add to their number, but have thought I might usefully try to describe the main lines of advance of physical science, including astronomy and mathematics . . . in language non-technical enough to be understood by readers who have no scientific attainments or knowledge.

To go all the way from Thales to Eddington and make some sense of the journey is no small undertaking. With a variety of vehicles at his disposal to shorten it and provide more spectacular views, Jeans preferred to go on foot. The book's pedestrian method seems the deliberate choice of an old man who was minded to take a last long walk over the familiar country of his life's work before leaving it. He starts at the beginning and goes at his own pace to the end; he will not be hurried; and he is just as interested in the early stages, when men knew almost nothing about the stuff of the material world or how it moves and changes, as in the crowded last lap, where they know so much and are driven to such desperate mathematical feats to account for what they have observed. Those who assume that nothing much happened before Newton will note that Jeans takes half his book to reach him, and has more to say, for example, about the Pythagoreans than about Planck. At each significant turn of the road we are briefly introduced to those who were most curious about the way of their physical world. The unprofessional reader will be unaware of the nicety of the detail which Jeans inserts at each stage; the professional will pay him the compliment of stopping to think quite hard and quite often.

If one falls into step with Jeans this long walk will for most of its way be very rewarding. The danger in unravelling thus so complex a story is that it may be difficult to keep the vital connections clear and to throw into sufficient relief the great succession of basic theory, experiment and profound generalisation which tower along the route. It is only at the end, in his summary of the advances made in 1887–1946, that Jeans seems to get short of wind. Einstein, Planck, Thomson, Rutherford, Bohr, Eddington appear almost simultaneously; relativity, quantum theory and wave mechanics crowd in for explanation; and the non-technical reader ends his walk at a crowded reception of giants on today's frontier of physical science. If he stays the course to the end he may emerge as short of comprehension of its final stage as his mentor is of wind. Nevertheless his long walk will have powerfully stretched his mind. He will not forget the follies, fantasies and frustrations, the dead ends, lucky flukes and stubbornness of error, which with blind patient effort and the strong strokes of genius make up the growth of physical science. BARRINGTON GATES

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Week-end Competitions

No. 925

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The headmaster of a progressive school is leaving: The usual prizes are offered for the closing 150 words of his last speech to his pupils.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 922

Set by Naomi Lewis

Prizes are offered for the most telling reply to one of the following: Lucasta (On Going to the Wars) to Lovelace; Cynara to Ernest Dowson; Friar Lawrence to Friar Browning. The answer should be in not more than 16 lines, retaining the original verse form.

Report by Naomi Lewis

The love poem and the hate poem—how difficult it is to know which is which. The most pregnant of literary silences belongs to Cynara. The replies ranged from cynical to devoted-grieving, but the right one has still to be made. A sort of Elizabeth Siddal she may have been, but not, as some competitors made her, a hard-boiled charmer whom Dowson would never have dared to address in his fashion. "I have been faithful to you, Dowson, in your fashion" (F. Auerbach) is as neat a reply as any. But if Dowson was, on the whole, left in possession of the field, Lovelace was thoroughly routed by the wit and chivalry of more than a hundred competitors.

Would thou hadst in this nunnery heard
The comment on thy flight!

wrote Douglas Hawson. I quote some of the gracefully stinging conclusions.

Love heeds the wild and broken cry,
Not the well-turned conceit;
I could have loved thee more, had thy
Professions been less neat.

L.E.J.

Since now I know the hidden door
To thy true happiness,
I'll honour thee, my Dear, much more,
And love thee somewhat less.

T. F. BRENCHLEY

A laggard in the lists of love
No hero he in wars,
And who shall false to Venus prove
Is traitor eke to Mars.

HORACE B. SAMUEL

Good entries came also from D.S.P., "Nan," R. S. Jaffray. A prize of two guineas goes to Mary Drewery, the remaining four guineas to be divided among Arthur Osborne, Petty Officer, Kenneth Chester, J.C.S.

TO COLONEL LOVELACE, AT THE WARRES, FROM LUCASTA

How soon, Love, will these Warres be done
That keepe us two apart?
Thy Battles in the Field once won,
Lay siege unto my Heart.

No Nunnerie my virgin breast
But Fortresse unassail'd.
Canst thou its seeming Frailtie test,
Where other men have fail'd?

Think not of Manliness the reins
In wooing mee to yield;
Blood runs as redly in my veins
As on the Battlefield.

Then shalt thou double Honour win
If me thou dost subdue.
In thee the Conquerour shall be twin:
Soldier—and Lover, too.

MARY DREWERY

TO R.L., LEAVING FOR THE WARS.

Sweet, thine unkindness I forgive,
And that polygamy
That bids thee with thine Honour live,
And with Bellona lie.

Go forth to win, by force of arms
And faith incarnadined,
A mistress and a foe, whose charms
More please thy martial mind.

And when, in triumph from the chase,
Thy love in chains is led,
Thou'lt carry, with a bold embrace,
Thy wars into thy bed.

ARTHUR OSBORNE

TO R.L., ON HIS GOING TO THE WARRES

Protest not (sweet) that I deride
Thy soule's Nobilitie,
Though uncased steel, and martial pride
Disdaine my Sanctuarie.

Goe, pulse thy heart with new affrays
And seek a sterner fame,
Spurn Lovers' nights, let Soldiers' days
Eclipse Lucasta's name.

But this Inconstancy is such
That I too can assesse
Since you love Honour (deare) so much
I love my Lovelace lesse.

PETTY OFFICER

FRIAR LAWRENCE TO FRIAR BROWNING

I may be a country bumpkin,
Earthy of the earth we tread on,
But it's my kind grow the pumpkin
That the saintly paunch is fed on
Though the truth may here be hinted
Sotto voce in conclusion,
That the things I've never stinted
Are the very things that you shun.

Well, tastes differ. I'm a gay man
But don't curse me in the cloister
If profanely as a layman
I occasionally roister.
Other sins may be more lasting
And may breed in you a canker.
And what is the use of fasting
If it only causes rancour?

KENNETH CHESTER

CYNARA TO ERNEST DOWSON

The years, ah! fifty years have seen thine ardou
freeze,
Thy shadow pale, Ernest! The young men, gla
and chaste,
Cold-shoulder thee from all the new anthologies,
For they are desiccate and sick of purple passion;
And we awake and find the land is waste:
I have been useful to thee, Ernest! while in fashio

They have forgot much, Ernest! scattered to t
wind
Rhyme and the flowers of song, the torments and t
rages;
And lilies fade, and lips to-day are unrefined,
And men are desiccate and sick of purple passion;
And falls the shadow on dust and dry salvages
I have been useful to thee, Ernest! while in fashio

J.C.S.

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GRATIFYING PROGRESS

Mr. H. Eric Miller at the Annual Mee reviewed the Tea and Rubber Planta industries and illustrated the gratif progress of Harrisons and Crosfield brief summaries of the present positio the East. "The economic recovery Malaya," he said, "has been rapid bey expectation due to the common sense e prise and adaptability shown by busi men of all races in circumstances w have put those qualities to the test."

Of the business as a whole he said: " greater part of the profits we earn are direct result of our initiative and enter as merchants. We have developed an e sive general trading business all over world performing a valuable function British manufacturers who are thereby abled to concentrate on their own prob of production knowing that their effort in overseas markets is in the h of specialists."

The Vice-Chairman, Mr. H. O. P outlined the Company's operations Canada which he had recently inspe Originally confined to tea and coffee, Canadian business now covers the i and distribution of raw materials for i try including the paint, textile, ru paper and tanning trades, feeding oil agriculture, and other lines.

The Report was adopted and a Dividend of 20 per cent (making 25 per for the year) on the Deferred Ordi Stock was approved.

Appointments Vacant

None of the vacancies in these columns relates to a man between 18 and 50 inclusive or a woman between 18 and 40 inclusive unless he or she is excepted from the provision of the Control of Engagement Order, 1947, or the vacancy is for employment excepted from the provision of that Order.

VICTORIA Univ. College, Wellington, N.Z. Applics. invited for position of Professor of Psychology and Head of the Department. Salary £1,200 p.a. (N.Z.). Applics. close with the Secretary, Universities Bureau, London, and with the Registrar, Victoria University College, on Nov. 30, 1947. Further partics. may be obtained from Secy., Universities Bureau of the British Empire, 8 Park St. London, W.1.

UNIVERSITY of the Witwatersrand. Applics. invited for a Professor of French and Romance. Salary is on the scale £1,100×£50—£1,400 p.a., plus a temporary cost of living allowance which at present is £75 p.a., if the Professor is a married man or has dependants, £46 16s. p.a. in the case of a single man. Closing date for receipt of applics. is Nov. 24, 1947. Further partics. may be obtained from Secy., Universities Bureau of the British Empire, 8 Park St. London, W.1.

UNIVERSITY of the Witwatersrand. Applics. invited for a Lecturer in Economics. Salary scale is £530×£25—£800 p.a., plus a temporary cost of living allowance which at present is £75 p.a. if the member of staff is a married man or has dependants, £46 16s. p.a. in the case of a single man. Closing date for receipt of applics. is Nov. 24, 1947. Further partics. from Secy., Universities Bureau of the British Empire, 8 Park St. London, W.1.

L.C.C. Applics. invited from women for appointment as inspector in the London Education service. Sal. scale £1,000×£50—£1,300 p.a. In special circumstances a candi- ate may be appointed at a sal. above mini- num of scale. Duties are to advise upon, rganise and inspect education in various types f educational establishments, particularly resi- ential schools and homes. The person ap- ointed will be reqd. to perform such other uties as may be prescribed from time to time. Candidates should possess a good degree, be nterested in the problems of children in need f special educational treatment and in the roblems of boarding school education. Applic. orms from Education Officer (Estab. 2), County Hall, S.E.1 (enclosing s.a.e.), return- ble by November 26, 1947. Canvassing dis- ualifies. (3321.)

KINGSTON-upon-Hull Education Authority. Required, as soon as possible, a Senior ssistant Lecturer in Architecture for appoint- nent to Kingston-upon-Hull College of Art nd Crafts. Candidates should possess a De- ree or Diploma of a recog. School of Archi- ecture and be qualified (in co-operation with hree other full-time Lecturers) to lecture, and supervise the studio work, in connection ith the Five Year Diploma Course. Salary ill be in accordance with Burnham Scale of laries for Technical Institutions, i.e., £600 y £25 to £750 (men) or £480 by £20 to 600 (women), with additional allowances for aining. Partics. of appointment and applic. rms (to be returned by Nov. 29) may be ob- ined on receipt of a s.a. foolscap env. from irector of Education, Guildhall, Kingston- pon-Hull.

B.B.C. invites applics. from men and women for post of Education Officer, in Scotland. uties will involve travelling in Scotland to sit schools and to hold meetings and discus- ons with teachers and with educational bodies. eneral educational exp. of as varied a nature possible is desirable. This should include perience of teaching in school and of further ucation and a good knowledge of the educa- nal system. Pending settlement of the Cor- ration's post-war establishment now proceed- g, the post will be non-estab., on Consoli- ted sal. scale rising by increments of £40 to max. of £890 p.a. Applics. must be made the prescribed form which can, together th further details of post and information the Superann. position of teachers serving th the B.B.C., be obtained from Appoint- nts Officer, B.B.C., Broadcasting House, ndon, W.1. For reply please enclose s.a.e. osing date for receipt of completed applic. rms is three weeks from the date of this in- tion. Envelopes should be marked "Edu- ion—Scotland N. Stm."

AST Africa. Applics. invited for post of Assistant Education Development Officer to e new Groundnut Project areas. Duties will lude the training of native instructors in dern methods of English and technical in- uction based on films, film strips, models, mophone records, etc. Good academic and fessional qualifics. and exp. of language- ching and use of visual aids are desirable, also important are personality, organising lity and enthusiasm. Candidates should be ng, energetic and preferably unmarried. e contract is for 2 years in first instance, ry £800 (eight hundred pounds) p.a. Ap- cation to United Africa Co. (Managing ency), Ltd., Unilever House, E.C.4, marked Educational Development Officer."

ETERBOROUGH Joint Education Board. County Grammar School for Girls (500 ils). Reqd. in Jan., a Senior Physical Train- Mistress to organise Physical Education oughout the School and share teaching of mastics, games and swimming. The School its own swimming pool and qualifics. in mming will be a recommendation. Sal. rding to the Burnham Report, together h an allowance for special responsibility. plic. forms, which may be obtained from lie Tait, Chief Education Officer, Town l, Peterborough, to be returned as soon as sible to Headmistress at the School.

Appointments Vacant—continued

L.C.C. Reqd. in day schools for partially sighted children in London: (1) Assistant Mistresses with knowledge of infants' methods, (2) Assistant Mistresses for junior boys and girls, (3) Assistant Masters capable of teaching Physical Training. Ability to play the piano, or teach Art desirable in all cases. Burnham Scale salaries plus two increments carried beyond max. Applic. forms (s.a.e. nec.), from Educ. Officer (S.S.5), County Hall, S.E.1, returnable within two weeks. (3319.)

GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Newent Grammar School. Headmaster: H. Alan Peacock, M.Sc. Wanted for January, either (a) Master or Mistress to take Art throughout the School to School Cert., with some Mathematics in the Lower School; and (b) A Mistress to take Domestic Science throughout the School to School Cert., with some General Science and Religious Knowl. in Lower School; or (c) A Mistress to take Art and Domestic Science throughout the School to School Certificate; and (d) A Master or Mistress to take Mathematics, General Science and Religious Knowl. in Lower School. For both posts ability to take Games would be a recommendation. Post (a) is vacant now and a suitable applicant could be appointed immediately. This is a co-educational school of 230 pupils situated on the northern limit of the Forest of Dean, and the craft posts offer especial scope for initiative and enthusiasm. Applics. to the Headmaster.

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Personal

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